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IMPERIAL TWILIGHT



Photo Koller Tanár, Budapest.

Karl and Zita in Hungarian coronation robes.

IMPERIAL TWILIGHT

THE STORY OF
KARL AND ZITA
OF HUNGARY

By Bertita Harding

"Though I stop writing, I leave much in the ink well . . ."

HORACE D'AZANCOT



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To Sári,
my mother

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PART ONE

THE PRINCE

CHAPTER 1

IT WAS late summer of 1887.

A hush lay over Castle Persenbeug in Lower Austria where Otto, known as "*der schönste Erzherzog*," ("the handsomest of the Archdukes"), paced the floor.

He paced it nervously—something he was not used to at all, since life had hitherto been singularly free from any crisis that called for nervous pacing. Gallant adventures, escapades or perils, these Otto knew quite well. He was a rake, jester, sportsman and hunter whose reckless feats and pranks provided grist for international gossip mills. His specialty had always been excitement rather than anxiety. Yet he was anxious now, and to no small degree, over an unloved wife who had come down in childbirth.

That she should be unloved was not Maria Josepha's fault. The Fates had been unkind to her. For, even by the most charitable standards of pulchritude, the Saxon Princess could not be called anything but plain. She was square of build, with too little neck, too much circumference, a starched rigidity of carriage and the walk of a grenadier. Her florid face with its thick lips, mighty nose and somewhat blank china-blue eyes was topped by a mass of frizzled hair, indeterminate in shade, which defied every effort at control. Worn in a full-blown pompadour, this bushy mane further offset a pair of long and excessively pink ears, the fleshy lobes of which were pinked with two dull yellowing pearls. Apart from these pearls of sickly hue, Maria Josepha made no use of ornament. Wise instinct told her that if ugliness

can vie with beauty for a certain picturesque interest, mere plainness such as hers fell defeated in a battle unfought because not worth the fighting.

She knew also that as a woman she would be unloved. Her marriage, like that of many a princess since the dawn of history, had been decreed by elders who spoke solemn words concerning duty and political expedience. To brood over the outcome of such a compulsory arrangement was both futile and superfluous, since long-established precedent had dulled the keen edge of pity. A trivial incident it had seemed, that King George's daughter left her native Dresden in the manner of a hostage to insure amity between the Saxon State and its powerful neighbor, the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Just how such wholesale amity, based on the incompatibility of two hapless human beings, could be cheerfully guaranteed was a point that never troubled advocates of the "expansion-by-marriage" policy. The royal habit of obedience, inculcated through the centuries, seldom broke down; all who would wear the purple must bow to dynastic law, no matter what the sacrifice. And, often as not, they gloried in it. This was the case with Maria Josepha, who not only gloried in the satisfaction of having brought honor to her country through a Hapsburg alliance, but who secretly rejoiced that such a prize as Archduke Otto should be hers. Charming Otto had been the dream of many a Viennese maid, and it was clear that only a ukase from Schönbrunn could have caused him to veer in Maria Josepha's direction. The homely girl had known of this, though it caused her no humiliation. The thrill of his presence and the mere sight of him were enough; she could forget that he had come by force, so long as he had come at all.

The Archduke saw things in a far less rosy light. As Emperor



Photo Koller Tanár, Budapest.

Karl's father, "Handsome Otto."

Liebe Stephanie.

Es ist von meinem
Gegensatz und Hoge
Lebenszeit. Nervengleiches
aus meine Exist.

Sei gnug für die
arme Klänge die das
einige ist, was von
mir übrig bleibt.

Allea Dependanten,
Leporello, Bonifacio
Trivello, La Torre, Pro-

Lyola, Leopold, etc
etc, sage meine
letzten Grüße.

Ich grüße auch die
den Tod, der allein
meinen guten Namen
retten kann.

Wird endlich
unverändert, sein
Wird lebender

Durow

Archduke Rudolf's suicide letter to his wife Stephanie (now Princess Lónyay).

Franz Joseph's favorite nephew (Otto's father, Archduke Karl Ludwig, was the monarch's second brother) he had been made to feel the pressure of dynastic authority. He realized that the House of Hapsburg had risen to power solely by adherence to a Spartan code of self-effacement for the sake of family gain. In youth Franz Joseph himself had broken the sacred rule; he had married for love and lived to rue his folly when love brought grief and drew from him the energies that should have served the state. But from his own mistake the Emperor learned a lesson to be heeded by his nearest of kin and by their descendants as well. Love was a fantasy, a myth! Let reason reign. . . .

The weight of this hard resolution had already fallen on Rudolf, the Emperor's son and Austria's Heir Apparent, for whom six years earlier a royal bride had been fetched from Belgium. Rudolf was far from happy with the Coburg Princess; he and Stephanie were known to quarrel night and day. But King Leopold II, father of the bartered bride, had signed a trade pact with Austria, thereby proving that the personal wretchedness of a crown prince served noble ends.

The only person who openly sympathized with Rudolf was his cousin, Archduke Otto. Sharing the same matrimonial fate, the two young men ultimately became boon companions in many an unconventional escapade outside the strict confines of wedlock. Otto in particular needed Rudolf's friendship, since he had entered the Saxon alliance in a spirit of dubious optimism. Awed by his uncle's wish (Emperor Franz Joseph's wishes were commands), he had pledged himself to marry Maria Josepha unseen; it was an act of dynastic loyalty which ever after would loom before him as the ghastliest nonsense. Naturally he had discounted the possibility of winning an unprepossessing bride. Before meeting his betrothed Otto had

simply trusted his own never-failing luck, certain that it would favor him with an enchanting surprise. Surprise without enchantment had been his lot when the Saxon damsel stood before him, blushing under her crimped mane and holding out a Brobdingnagian hand in greeting.

Betrothal, wedding, grotesque honeymoon had followed in grim order. Out of compassion for his bewildered bride Otto had made a gallant effort to play groom, but this proved a disheartening game. The lukewarm kisses he bestowed at home soon chilled. They were offset by forbidden caresses exchanged in former bachelor haunts and clandestine boudoirs whither his fancies led him. The natural corollary to a loveless union—infidelity—became Otto's escape. Society winked tolerantly at his sinful pastimes, seeing in them only a logical solution. This in turn was a logic in which Otto earnestly concurred.

Maria Josepha begged to differ. She did not relish lonely nights haunted by visions of her husband locked in other women's arms. Nor could she avenge herself by plotting adulterous measures in return, since her own dearth of charms proved a decided handicap. Besides, Maria Josepha had been endowed with principles. She had come from an intensely religious home where Catholic influence held sway and where nothing was ever undertaken without counsel from the confessional. To this source, then, she had turned in her distress, only to hear a piece of sound advice.

"Children," spoke the Court Chaplain, Dr. Patrizius, "link husband and wife together as no other human factor can."

Maria Josepha's course of conduct was clear: she must arouse Otto's interest in paternity.

Before long her purpose met with success and the rumor spread that Castle Persenbeug expected an heir. The provincial

post hastened to Vienna with confirmation for the Emperor, who promptly ordered the item to be entered in the court bulletin. Since all this had followed an honorable and extremely commonplace pattern—marriage, birth and death being but the ordinary routine of human existence—no one was very much impressed or even surprised. No one, that is, but Archduke Otto.

After the manner of handsome men he had thought of the future only from his own point of view: with Otto in the world, was there any need for a replica of Otto? His ideas on wedlock, until Franz Joseph had revised them, had been: "Why make one woman unhappy, when there are so many to make happy?" In short, the prospect of paternity was not at all welcome to the man with a perennial bachelor heart.

For a time the Archduke had found himself actually resenting Maria Josepha's state. Though he had certainly and admittedly been involved in the matter he could not throw off the notion that it had happened somehow against his will. He had been tricked by the wiles of a scheming female, and a homely one at that. Literature, he mused, veiled such things in happy euphemism. Court circulars and future chronicles of Hapsburg lore would record that the Archduchess had "presented" her husband with an heir. Well, Otto did not think the phrase particularly apt. Maria Josepha, he reflected surlily, had never inquired whether such a gift might be welcome. It was like buying him a green cravat when he hadn't so much as mentioned that he wished a green cravat.

For a time, then, he had been quite bitter, absenting himself from home (even more than was his usual custom) and sedulously avoiding the most harmless tête-à-tête with his wife. A certain defiance, which was more shyness than defiance, had taken possession of him. Otto imagined that as Maria Josepha

looked at him there hovered a smile of triumph, ever so faintly, behind her meek expressionless eyes. More than anything else he hated to meet that smile. It made him feel that his freedom, unaffected until now by her insignificant presence, would be curtailed hereafter by an unknown ally whom she had summoned to her aid. Henceforth she would not stand alone; there would be two against him.

He spent several weeks hating the unborn foe and barricading his own soul against the inevitable. And then something happened. Maria Josepha, walking in the garden, tripped over a stone. Already heavy with her burden (she had passed the half-way mark of her pregnancy) the woman fell full length and faced the danger of miscarriage. Otto was called from Vienna to find his wife under the care of worried physicians who presaged the worst for mother and child.

This wrought a change in the Archduke. Quite suddenly he realized that not only Maria Josepha but the fruit she bore mattered a great deal. The thought of losing one or the other became unbearable and not to be accepted for a moment. A specialist, a staff of expert nurses, a priest who might appeal to the heavens for special mercies, all must come to Persenbeug and do their utmost in this crisis. No effort or expense would be spared in seeing Maria Josepha through.

As it happened Maria Josepha saw herself through. Her injury had not been half so critical as it had appeared. After a few days of ostensible suffering (which brought a terrified pallor to the Archduke's face) the patient made an unexpected and splendid recovery; all pain seemed to have vanished and a successful course of gestation was assured. Back on her feet Maria Josepha resumed her previous life of busy anticipation. She drew up plans for the royal nursery and gathered a staff of seamstresses

about her to stitch the infant's layette. In short, matters at Persenbeug presently went on much as before, except for Otto.

Otto decidedly was no longer the same. Vienna temptations—the theaters, cabarets, gambling tables and lighthearted amours that once had filled his time—now faded into the background. Horse and carriage idled in the mews while the master of Persenbeug, his military duties done, lingered at his fireside, reading aloud to his wife and on occasion patting her pink plump hand. If there had ever been the slightest doubt about it, paternity was now the one thing Otto craved, and he did not intend to drift from home until this happy goal had been attained.

Midsummer went and with the beginning of August the hour of Maria Josepha's delivery drew near. Barring a brief spell of self-induced discomfort, the homely Archduchess had thoroughly enjoyed her pregnancy, which had won for her the love and devotion of a wandering mate. Quite cheerfully she faced the final ordeal. No matter how racking, it could but seal her victory for, once Otto's child lay in her arms, her days of wifely misery were done.

Her calculation proved correct. On August 17, the fateful day, Archduke Otto paced the floor—and paced it nervously. He chewed a cigarette, tugged at his small mustache and smoothed down his dark rebellious locks while with twitching fingers he first buttoned, then unbuttoned, the red dolman of his uniform.

At last the suspense came to an end. A nurse knocked on the Archduke's door.

"Kaiserliche Hoheit," she announced, *"es ist ein Bub'l!"* ("Your Imperial Highness, it is a boy!")

At this the excited father stumbled over a plush settee as he rushed out into the hall and bounded across the corridor. On

the threshold to his wife's room Otto's steps grew more measured. He tiptoed through the doorway and listened to the subdued bustle and activity that went on in the adjoining nursery. Amid a confusion of muffled noises there now drifted toward him a shrill piping squeal, as furious and imperious a sound as had ever reached his ears. But to the Archduke it was ravishingly beautiful.

It was the voice of his own son.

CHAPTER 2

THE baby rested in its lace-covered crib protesting loudly against a hostile world which imposed not only the extraordinary task of breathing but also the shock of a splashing bath on the very instant of arrival. A rude reception, to say the least, and one which no newborn infant could endure without the most emphatic disapproval. But gradually these inaugural protests, uttered at life's beginning, gave way to hiccoughs and delicious exhaustion after which glassy eyes and tiny fluttering fists strove to make contact with that unknown and enveloping something called space.

This space, invisible and intangible though it was, held now a warm and satisfying presence. The baby gurgled peacefully as its hands struck against that presence and were softly imprisoned by it, and Archduke Otto's face wore an odd smile as the fingers of his child twined about his own thumb in a first unforgettable greeting.

He turned next to his wife, whose wan, peaked face lay buried in the pillows. Strange that it should be so eloquent and luminous, and that he should not have seen its light or eloquence before! The miracle of birth had caused this hidden countenance to shed its mask and to be known for an intrinsic splendor of its own.

"*Ich dank' Dir,*" he said simply, bending over the still figure. ("I thank thee . . .")

Maria Josepha's eyes looked at him steadily, then closed in

deep and joyous satisfaction. With a small sigh, denoting a great weariness, she fell asleep.

Otto returned to his study, there to pen urgent dispatches which must be sent to Vienna by the evening post. In wording the happy message he also made announcement of the infant's name, Karl Franz Joseph, which had been determined upon many moons ago. It was a name which first of all would please the Emperor and, when reduced to the lone syllable of Karl, would prove adequate for daily use. Otto was firmly set against the Friedrichs and Wilhelms current in Hohenzollern circles at Berlin, as well as the Siegfrieds, Sigismunds and other heroic Nibelungen designations favored by lesser German nobility. It would be awkward, he reflected, to bounce a small Wotan or a howling Brünnhilde on one's knee. Far better for such purposes to choose a simple Mitzi, Rudi, Franz or Karl. To be sure, in the case of a daughter, Otto might have had difficulty presenting her at court as the Archduchess Mitzi, but in his present state of elation this detail had not occurred to him.

The blond, blue-eyed Karl flourished and grew through baby days with fortune smiling upon him. He skirted the graver ills of childhood and developed into a lively youngster of exceptional sturdiness. Differing from his father in coloring, he was not destined to inherit the latter's good looks. On the other hand, Maria Josepha's heavy Saxon features emerged in Karl with a refinement of line which held a perennially boyish appeal. In later years this quality, coupled with a tall elegant figure and an ample measure of personal charm, would cause him to be spoken of as handsome.

When the small Prince was a year and a half old the world awoke suddenly to a grisly Hapsburg drama. Archduke Rudolf, only son of Emperor Franz Joseph, had been found dead (by

either suicide or murder) at the romantic hunting lodge of Mayerling. Beside the blood-covered form of the Imperial Heir another body had been discovered; it was that of Marie Vetsera, the seventeen-year-old countess with whom Rudolf had engaged in an ill-starred amour.

Here was not only tragedy but scandal of a high order. The distraught Emperor, bent upon saving the honor of his house, mastered his sorrow in a superhuman gesture: he drew a thick veil of secrecy about the affair, obfuscating the true history of events and masquerading the sordid *dénouement* as a shooting accident.

The error of such action soon became apparent, for popular imagination indulged in wild conjectures concerning the case. No fewer than twenty-three versions of the Rudolf mystery have been assembled to date, the outstanding among these showing a fascinating divergence of plot, to wit:

- Rudolf had political enemies who killed him by cracking a bottle of champagne over his head.
- Vetsera shot her lover in a jealous fit.
- Franz Joseph ordered the death of his son because the latter planned to seize Hungary and make himself king.
- Archduke Karl Ludwig, the Emperor's brother, butchered his nephew so that Otto (or Otto's brother, Franz Ferdinand) might succeed as Crown Prince.
- Countess Helene Vetsera, Marie's buxom mother, was herself in love with Rudolf and had made overtures toward him. When he rebuffed her she plotted his death.
- A Mayerling game warden, whose daughter most likely had been violated by the Prince, took the law into his own hands.
- The youthful Marie Vetsera performed an emasculating operation upon Rudolf, which he did not survive (nor did she, but this was never explained).

—“He Did Not Die At Mayerling,” but escaped to America while a substitute corpse from the Vienna morgue was neatly furbished to fill his place. (This corpse fooled the Archduke’s father, his mother, his valet—and all the *jeunesse dorée* of Austria’s capital with whom Rudolf had been in daily contact!)

That Crown Princess Stephanie was actually in possession of a farewell letter from her husband, in which he informed her of his plan to die, remained unknown. Stephanie’s pride had suffered far too great a jolt for any admission of her failure as a wife; the world must not learn—at least, not immediately—that she had been forsaken by a husband who preferred death with his mistress to life beside an incompatible mate.

It was not that Rudolf had hated Stephanie. His treatment of her had been consistently kind, so that in tender moments she called him (with her heavy Belgian accent) her dear *Coco*. Also, his correspondence with his wife contained many an affectionate phrase revealing a determination on his part to make the best of a dreary bargain. But when Marie entered his life Rudolf’s powers as an actor had come to an end; he could play the fond husband no longer. He asked first for divorce, then annulment of his marriage, only to be refused both. The fact that some other compromise would not do must be ascribed to his own stubbornness.

At any rate, the answer to what happened at Mayerling lay in Stephanie’s hand, and there it rested thirty-six long years. Not until 1935 was Rudolf’s final note made public in the old woman’s memoirs, published by Koehler (Amelang) in Leipzig. The text was brief:

“Dear Stephanie!

“You are released from my presence and from the burden

of me; be happy after your fashion. Show kindness to our poor Little One,* who is all that is left of me. To all our friends, especially Bombelles, Spindler, Latour, Nowo, Gisela, Leopold, etc. etc. convey my last greetings.

"I go calmly to my death, which alone can save my good name.

"I embrace you,

"Affectionately,

"RUDOLF."

Regardless of ultimate interpretations yet to be given to this Hapsburg tragedy, its immediate effect brought up the question of succession. Archduke Otto, most dear to Franz Joseph, might logically have taken Rudolf's place. But Otto's character, like that of his cousin, was beset by emotional hazards. He had been married against his will. Although the birth of a son had transformed the unhappy union into an apparently blissful one, Franz Joseph was wary and distrustful of such regeneration. After the novelty of fatherhood had worn off, Otto most likely would return to bachelor habits which promptly might throw the state into another Vetsera affair. No, decidedly Otto would not do.

But the "handsomest" Archduke had two brothers, Franz Ferdinand and Ferdinand Karl, both of whom would admirably qualify. The choice fell on the elder, Franz Ferdinand. True, this young man was delicate in health (he had tuberculosis) and people found him surly of disposition, but his otherwise exemplary conduct dispelled all danger of amorous frivolity. Instead of boudoir triumphs the sickly Prince craved mastery of the great outdoors; he longed to be an alpinist and hunter. Whenever possible he followed the chase, loving the sight of blood as it gushed from a felled quarry. No *cancan* danced in gaudy smoke-

* His daughter Elisabeth.

laden cabarets compared to the thrill of tracking the chamois or the wild boar to its lair and finishing the cornered beast with a blast of spattering hot lead. In later years this violent hobby would lead to a fierce passion earning the young man the gruesome epithet of the Bloody Archduke.

Franz Ferdinand was twenty-six when Rudolf's cloak dropped on his shoulders. In view of his new rôle the matter of his health could now no longer be overlooked. A systematic plan was soon laid out whereby the Heir Apparent would spend nine months of the year in mild and curative climates while the remaining time must suffice for military as well as civil training at home.

Among foreign spots to be visited the choice fell first upon Italy; here Franz Ferdinand possessed fine holdings inherited through his late mother, who had been a Princess of Bourbon-Sicily. It was because of this Latin connection that he was wont to call himself not Archduke of Hapsburg but of Austria-Este.

The itinerary also included Empress Elisabeth's beloved haunts—Corfu in the Ionian Sea, and Madeira off the coast of Africa. At Funchal, where almost perennial sunshine beckoned, the spacious villa of Count Carvajal was always available to royal guests whose presence enhanced the island's tourist attraction. A single princelet alighting there would lure a stream of pilgrims under the travel banner of that Derbyshire impresario, Mr. Thomas Cook, who was the father of the excursion trade.

Finally there remained Mallorca, Minorca, Iviza and the smaller islets of the Balearic group just across from Valencia. These were subject to Spain, a country whose ruling family happened to be closely linked with Schönbrunn.

It was at Mallorca that Franz Ferdinand for the first time came face to face with a strange hirsute uncle, the kobold-like

Ludwig Salvator of Tuscany. This Hapsburg (of a collateral line that enjoyed more officious than official rating) was a scholar and writer of some prestige. His particular interest centered on deep-sea fishing, sailing, probing into ancient systems of navigation, as well as modern diving for submarine treasure. He had engaged in prolonged scientific research which resulted in several treatises of marine lore, and which twice won him a medal. But in addition to all this, Archduke Ludwig Salvator was a Socialist. He piloted a decrepit barge on which he scrubbed the deck, moored the riggings, peeled potatoes and ate with the crew. In keeping with his anti-Capitalist ideas he scorned effete body refinements such as haircuts, shaves, manicures and the daily bath, reducing these performances to the Marxian minimum. As a result there hovered about Uncle Ludwig Salvator a faint odor which did not tickle the imperial noses of his Viennese kin. When he arrived on rare visits to Schönbrunn, clad in a loose smock with dirty cuffs and bits of string tied through the buttonholes (he disapproved of buttons) a general exodus of relatives took place. As a rule none but Franz Joseph himself remained to have a chat with the Balearic Comrade.

Since Ludwig Salvator was regarded as bizarre rather than dangerous, no steps had been taken to prevent his present meeting with the new Crown Prince. Over a jug of mild Xerez the grizzled apostle of equality expounded his Utopian views while Franz Ferdinand listened in ill-concealed boredom.

"The day will come," the Tuscan roared, "when wealth and privilege must go!"

The younger man raised quizzical eyebrows. "As far as you are concerned, Uncle Ludi, they have already gone—"

But the old mariner had more to say. "There will be an end to titles. Emperors, kings, archdukes, princelets and other blood-

sucking parasites will drop so low that before long I shall be able to man my ship with counts and baronets at two pesetas a dozen."

This drew a chortle from Franz Ferdinand. "What about your own title?" he asked.

"I am Lodvigo of the Islands. The name of Hapsburg interests me no more."

That was all right with Franz Ferdinand, provided Uncle Ludi kept away from the mainland. The young Archduke explained as much. However, Lodvigo of the Islands had other plans, and all of them centered on the mainland.

"I must be there when it happens," he hinted darkly.

"When what happens?"

"World revolution! The uprising of the masses—"

The old chap pulled a hair from his flecked smock and drew a sleeve across his brow to wipe off perspiration. This gesture, more than any words that had been spoken, conveyed to the royal scion a sense of perilous reality. Ludwig Salvator, who had tossed aside his birthright in order to become a vagabond barge captain, served as a mirror wherein all Hapsburgs might spy themselves in proletarian guise.

It was not an alluring picture. Instinctively Franz Ferdinand withdrew into the chill recesses of his soul, there to hold counsel with himself. Not everything that the eccentric uncle had propounded seemed to make sense, but out of the ambiguous chatter Franz Ferdinand was able to draw a ready conclusion. Today he was but Heir Apparent; tomorrow he would be Emperor of a chaotic realm where discord brewed. He must watch his step! As monarch he must gird on his saber, don the spurs and keep a firm grip on the reins of government.

That would be his answer to Ludwig Salvator's vision of a triumphant proletariat.

CHAPTER 3

At Castle Persenbeug life went its tranquil way. Small Karl had long since passed the romper stage and been graduated into his first *Lederhos'n* (Tyrolean leather pants). He played at robbers or soldiers with the sons of his father's regimental friends. Among the lads who at intervals were shackled, stabbed or figuratively boiled in oil could be counted scions of Austria's noblest families. There was the young Count Draskovics, besides Prince Ferdinand of Montenuovo, Count Hans Wilczek and, wildest of all, Count Tamás Erdödy. Daily the noisy horde overran the shaded manorial grounds, climbing trees, building bivouacs or setting sail as Argonauts across the shallow pond.

Their shouts and laughter drowned out lesser sounds behind the castle walls where Archduchess Maria Josepha sighed and sometimes wept. Despite the joys of motherhood (a second baby, Maximilian, had followed soon after the birth of Karl) these were the years of her great loneliness. Franz Joseph had been right in taking a cynical view of Otto's marital reformation. Paternity having palled, the gay Archduke had begun straining at the leash even before the baptism of his younger son. Under the pretext of duties in town he had taken an elegant apartment on the *Ring*, not far from the *Hofburgtheater*. This location proved particularly fitting, since Otto had long been renowned as a patron of the Muses. In fact, although he seldom found time to visit Persenbeug, the Muses supped with him almost nightly.

At home, meanwhile, Maria Josepha was rapidly turning

from a cheerful *châtelaine* into a "critic on the hearth." Indulging in voluble outbursts of censure and reproof, she gave her light-footed husband all the more reason to stray from marital pastures.

All Vienna found Otto charming, irresistible. His wickedness was condoned because he sinned in the grand manner, with grace and style. Had not England's current Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII and himself a rake of the first water, made debonair scapegraces into figures of fashion?

Unfortunately Maria Josepha could not see things quite this way. The Muses had no preferential place in her stout bosom. Furthermore, the Saxon Princess had been reared in a strict Catholic house where right and wrong were so clearly defined that no loophole was left wherein to lodge a valid excuse. Whether the Seventh Commandment was broken in a pretty or a sordid manner remained the same to Maria Josepha; it was the transgression itself, regardless of circumstances, which aroused her loathing. She viewed her husband's sins with sorrow which in time turned to seething anger. Before the children learned to talk their parents had ceased to be on speaking terms.

With Otto's removal to Vienna the education of the little Princes was left entirely in Maria Josepha's hands. Naturally the embittered woman was bent upon eradicating any evil tendencies which the boys might have inherited from their father. Accordingly she summoned the clergy to her aid and promptly established two Jesuit tutors in the nursery wing. It was before these frocked and solemn masters that Karl and Maximilian recited their daily catechism while Maria Josepha, determined not to relax her vigilance for a single minute, sat sternly in attendance.

Only when Karl reached adolescence, and after a firm re-

ligious foundation had been assured, did the anxious mother vary her régime by adding secular teachers to the tutoring staff. In turn, Count George Wallis, Freiherr von Mattencloit, Prince Zdenko Lobkowitz and Count Franz Ledebur took charge of the growing Archduke. They would supervise Karl's education until he was ready to enter the University of Prague.

During this time Maria Josepha decided to move. Due to the unhappiness she had experienced there, Persenbeug Castle oppressed her. She took up residence instead at the abandoned Schloss Hetzendorf near Vienna, which Franz Joseph placed at her disposal. From here occasional excursions could be made to Reichenau and the Augarten, as well as the dreamy Vienna Forest, although the Archduchess for the most part shunned such pastimes. Her increasing piety called for seclusion rather than worldly contact, especially since her status as a neglected wife never ceased to mortify and humiliate her.

The high dudgeon in which Maria Josepha lived cast its dark spell over the older of her sons. Karl was a sensitive and impressionable lad. Quite early he felt himself torn by deep and conflicting emotions: pity at his mother's doleful lot, and a great longing for the bright presence of his father.

In summer Maria Josepha spent several weeks at Castle Miramar near Trieste, where Maximilian and Carlota of Mexico had sojourned prior to their overseas adventure. The marble palace overlooking the Adriatic had long since become a holiday resort for various members of the imperial house. Here Rudolf's widow, Stephanie, had found refuge with her small daughter, Erzsi, soon after the Mayerling tragedy. And here Franz Joseph's wife, the vagabond Empress Elisabeth, would sometimes stop in her wanderings to seek that which for her was unattainable—peace.

The change of address made little difference in the daily routine of Archduke Karl. Schoolmasters, governesses and ecclesiastic mentors surrounded him at work or play in Miramar as well as Hetzendorf. While making certain that her firstborn remained "good," Maria Josepha lost sight of the fact that it is bad for boys to be *too* good. She would have been shocked to hear that excessive virtue in youth lies at the bottom of most mature errors.

Only once, shortly before Karl's thirteenth birthday, was the severe curriculum disturbed by an event of historic magnitude. In June of the year 1900 Vienna was stunned by the news of Archduke Franz Ferdinand's marriage to an unknown Bohemian countess named Sophie Chotek, who had been in the employ of his Aunt Isabella at the Hradschin Palace in Prague. True, the Heir Apparent had often visited his Aunt Isabella, but that observing lady had counted on his leading one of her six ugly daughters to the altar. For several weeks the damsels in question had preened and palpitated in delicious uncertainty, each pondering secretly if she could indeed be the chosen one. Franz Ferdinand's selection of a Czech bride, frowned upon in Hapsburg circles, had come as a shattering surprise. Nothing could have created greater consternation than his request for the hand of Sophie Chotek, the sextet's beauteous governess.

"She is not of royal birth," warned hostile tongues, "the Emperor will not give his consent!"

But at the Hofburg matters had changed. Franz Joseph no longer chose the brides his hapless kinsmen had to marry; Rudolf and Otto had taught him the folly of that. The present situation was of course untenable, since a modest Bohemian noblewoman without regal quarterings to her escutcheon would never be accepted as Crown Princess (and later Empress) of



Photo Korthy, Vienna

Archduke Karl at the age of ten.



Photo Pietzner, Vienna.

Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, the former Countess Sofia Chotek.



Photo Adèle, Vienna.

Austria. But interference was of little use. The Heir Apparent must have his way in a personal matter which concerned himself alone. Only in so far as the monarchy was involved would there be a price to pay; the marriage must be a morganatic one and no issue from it could aspire to the throne. Otto's son, the little Archduke Karl, would at the proper time be invested as the next Crown Prince.

Thus the tired Emperor disposed of a crisis which in earlier years might have called forth a violent scene, ending with the Chotek woman's banishment from Austria while her recalcitrant lover was paired off with a Madrid Infanta or a spinster cousin of the Tsar.

Franz Ferdinand accepted this decision and swallowed his own bitter resentment in silence. His choice of a non-royal bride had in no sense emanated from a democratic impulse, since there slumbered within him the qualifications of a born autocrat. Only blind love and passion could have caused him to veer so sharply from the pattern of his true self. One thing he knew: he must have Sophie! But he did not intend to pay the Emperor's price—at least, not permanently. When Franz Ferdinand himself became Emperor the ban on Sophie (or on any children she might have borne) would be lifted by his own command. She would be Empress notwithstanding, and his sons would be his heirs. . . . With this loophole in mind it became an easy matter to endure present humiliation and to pretend agreement with a ruling uncle's will.

As for young Karl rising to the position of Heir Presumptive—well, one would see about that. To date Franz Ferdinand had shown nothing but affection for his brother's children, but now a sudden change came over him. He began to avoid contact with the boys so as not to be drawn into consultation with regard

to their schooling and to Karl's development in particular. Deftly he engineered a gradual estrangement between himself and the nephew who had become an unwelcome obstacle to his schemes.

The nephew in question continued to be badgered by history books and multiplication tables. The monotony of daily life under Maria Josepha's mandate did not subside until Karl entered cadet school where in turn he was groomed for military service.

Soldiering, contrary to the youth's silent hopes, brought no surcease from the classics. On October 1, 1905, the Archduke enlisted with the Seventh Dragoon Regiment of the Duke of Lorraine, but the staff of tutors went with him. Lessons kept pace with troop maneuvers in the small garrison town of Bilin, where Karl was quartered.

Since ladies were unwelcome in the barracks, Maria Josepha found herself losing contact with her son. But she soon hit upon a remedy. Two of her personal confidants, Count Franz Ceschi and Count Arthur von Polzer-Hoditz und Wolfrantz, made frequent visits to Bilin and the outlying maneuver grounds of Brixen. Through them the energetic matriarch continued to exercise remote control.

While thus being groomed for an ambiguous future, Karl nursed no exaggerated notions with regard to his own importance. Even if (most doubtful of prospects) he were one day to attain a crown, he knew that its concomitant would not be unlimited earthly power. Already he had learned to recognize the fetters that bound royalty to gilded heights. A legend was current in Vienna concerning Franz Joseph and a disgruntled corporal, who had appealed to his sovereign for redress. Sympathetically the Emperor had listened to the petitioner's tale of

woe, the while with furrowed brow he pondered the matter. At last, in Franz Joseph's most tender basso, had come a disarming reply:

"Ich glaub' nicht, dass ich was machen kann. Haben's keinen bekannten Feldwebel?" ("I don't think I can do anything. Don't you know of a sergeant with some influence?")

The year of Karl's majority was marked by his investiture (as a potential crowned head) with the Order of the Golden Fleece. The Emperor's patent together with a scroll containing the rules of the Order arrived at Bilin by special dispatch. With adolescent ardor Karl attempted to decipher these rules which had been set up centuries ago in the obsolete French of the Dukes of Burgundy, but the strange text seemed to defy translation.

"All that Your Imperial Highness is required to do," counseled Count Wallis, "is to sign—"

But Karl was painfully conscientious. Finding himself already too hedged in by obligations that were not of his own choosing, he was determined to know what further encroachments the Fleece would make upon his liberty. He marshaled reference books and dictionaries to his aid, laboring over the bylaws which, research disclosed, were so antique that they could not have been obeyed by the sincerest modern devotee.

This threw the young Archduke into a new conflict. How could he sign an oath which only medieval knights were able to keep? Was he not perjuring himself?

"It is a matter of symbolism," Wallis explained again. "All Emperors of Austria are wearers of the Golden Fleece."

In that case, Karl reflected, there was no other choice. Still fretting, he penned his name under the sacred vow.

Almost a year after this memorable occasion news arrived from Vienna that Archduke Otto lay seriously ill. Maria Josepha

hastened from Miramar to Schönau where her husband was currently in residence. She stayed half a day at the Augarten Palace, long enough to convince herself that Otto was perishing of an iniquitous disease, the fitting penalty for his misdeeds. But she did not remain to see him die. By the next train she returned to Trieste and peacefully resumed her needlepoint while sitting on a terrace near the sea. Her two companion ladies, the Countess Zosia Zamoyska and the Margravine Crescence Pallavicini, were busily engaged in basting a small patch of Battenberg lace. Together the three women swayed back and forth in their stiff rocking chairs, pausing occasionally to stare at the vacant horizon.

At last, on November 1, 1906, the final tidings came. Otto had ceased to breathe. But in departing he had struck a last ironic blow at Maria Josepha's sense of righteousness.

He had died on All Saints' Day.

CHAPTER 4

KARL took the loss of his father deeply to heart. Though there had been little contact between them, the boy had always felt a warm affection for this strange and irresponsible man whom Vienna had singled out as its favorite scapegrace. Otto's madcap career gave proof that Nature loves inconsistency and that the sinner does not always receive his just reward. Instead of being hated for his pranks the "handsomest" Archduke had been idolized by young and old, whereas no adulation crowned Maria Josepha's virtue—even her children feared rather than loved her. The Archduchess might not have understood, had someone told her, that after Otto's death Karl felt completely alone.

After the funeral an immediate change took place in the youth's life. He had served his year with the imperial army and it was now time to re-enter academic halls. Accompanied by Count Wallis the Archduke left at once for the University of Prague. Here a rigid program had been laid out by the Emperor's Minister of Education, Freiherr von Bienerth. Under the guidance of Professors Goll, von Ott, Ulbrich, Bráf and Pfaff, Karl was to be ushered into the complex world of Austro-Hungarian politics.

Following Franz Joseph's wishes, the Archduke had been assigned an apartment in the Hradschin Palace. Here he came into daily contact with the Archduchess Isabella and her bevy of daughters (who were still looking for husbands). As far as Karl was concerned, his age placed him outside the field of

candidates. Even had they set their caps for him, a union with one or another of Isabella's girls would have been scarcely feasible; as erstwhile prospects for his Uncle Ferdinand and the ladies could not confront the nephew in an identical mood. Thus Karl regarded the sextet merely as a covey of aunts, who shared with him a castle of 440 rooms, when they were not attending services at the near-by cathedral of St. Vitus.

As it happened, before long the worried Isabella was able to dispose of her brood. Three of the girls met with agreeable fortune: Maria Christine was betrothed to the Hereditary Prince of Salm-Salm; Maria Anna captured the heart and hand of Prince Élie of Parma; Maria Henrietta found favor with Prince Gottfried von Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst. True, these alliances did not completely satisfy the ambitious Isabella. Herself a former Princess of Croy, the Archduchess longed to see at least one of her daughters on a throne. She negotiated rather frantically with Madrid, where King Alfonso XIII had just reached a marriageable age; but Alfonso was courting Ena of Battenberg, granddaughter of England's Queen Victoria. Meanwhile Isabella's fourth child and namesake eloped with a simple Professor Paul Albrecht, who wielded a surgeon's scalpel in place of the elusive scepter.

"*Ach*," sighed Isabella, "with a professor in the family, what is royalty coming to?"

As for Karl, he was kept busy with his studies. Preparation for his office as future Heir Apparent, not to say Emperor, was fraught with problems which even his teachers found difficult to master. The Hapsburg realm, a massive conglomeration of nationalities and tongues, had yet to find the miraculous formula whereby its peoples could be made to share—rather than endure—a common destiny. There were as many racial hatreds

and yearnings as one could count provinces on the map. What form of government would give satisfaction, prosperity and justice to all? The answer to this question provided also a signal for the Dual Monarchy's survival or collapse.

Bohemia itself, where Karl wrestled with history texts of Austro-German complexion, seemed to be a nest of contradictions. Once bordering on the Roman Empire, within the rim of that vague territory known as Pannonia, the country had derived its name from the Celtic Boii, who were expelled by the Germanic Marcomanni about the beginning of the Christian era. In A.D. 451 the region was again invaded, this time by a Slavic people known as Cesks or Czechs. Six years later Rome was sacked by the Vandals and her power in Europe crumbled before the onslaught of continued German migrations from the North and East; Teutons, Goths, Franks, Lombards, Alemanni and Saxons swept over the continent in frightening hordes. These tribes, originally classed as Barbarians, took up Christianity and with the zeal characteristic of new converts set out to enlighten the rest of mankind. With fire and sword their greatest leader, Charlemagne, introduced Jesus to Hungary, Dalmatia, Bohemia, as well as to northern Spain where Moslems held sway. With the Gospel of the Cross came German-speaking monks and scholars who found the Bohemian locale especially congenial, though here they were not altogether successful; only much later, through Moravian efforts, did Christianity gain an ultimate foothold in Prague and its environs.

During the Tenth Century the Bohemian nation was united under a family of dukes known as the Przemyzl, who paid homage to the Holy Roman Emperors and eventually placed their country in a state of vassalage or fiefdom. But, after rising

to the rank of kings, the lords of Przemyśl died out in 1306 and for the next century and a quarter Bohemia was ruled by the dynasty of Luxemburg, under whose sponsorship the University of Prague was founded in 1348. (It was this ancient university, one of Central Europe's oldest seats of learning, which Archduke Karl was now attending.)

With the above events Bohemia's checkered career had only started. Up to the reign of Wenceslas IV the German influx steadily increased, but presently the Slavic elements pressed once more to the fore under a religious leader named Jan Hus, a peasant from the town of Husinec. It must be understood that Christianity in Bohemia had thus far meant the rudiments of Catholicism as furthered by the Papacy in Rome. But Hus stood for a blend of this faith with certain communal precepts inherent in the old Slav cults and strongly resembling the teachings of England's John Wycliffe. The Hussite followers were for the most part Czechs, a factor which colored the ecclesiastic strife with strong nationalistic overtones; Bohemia, too long a pawn of the Holy Roman Empire, yearned for autonomy. But in 1415 Hus was burned at the stake, after being tried before a Church Tribunal and found guilty of heresy. The cause he had represented was championed for a time by two fiery leaders, Ziska and Prokop, but its main impetus had been spent and the mirage of independence faded into the distance.

In 1521 Emperor Ferdinand I had the good taste to marry Anna, sister to King Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia. After the death of Louis, in battle against the Turks at Mohács, Anna's inheritance fell automatically to the Hapsburg crown lands. Thenceforth the scepter of Wenceslas, once held by the proud Dukes of Przemyśl, formed part of the official regalia sported by Holy Roman Emperors.

Almost three hundred years elapsed during which one Hapsburg after another sallied forth from imperial Vienna to pledge a royal oath in Prague, but still Bohemia was not fully Austrian. Far into modern times the Czech nation survived and clung to its dream.

In the long line of Austrian sovereigns none suffered greater mortification over this question than Emperor Franz Joseph. As head of a federation of states, which seemed to him the true meaning of empire, Franz Joseph was accustomed to consider minorities from both a practical and a political angle. Autonomy for everybody who wanted it was very nice indeed. But when carried to extremes, with every twiglet of the human family tree maintaining a particular brand of rugged individualism, would not autonomy lead to general ruin? Unfortunately the earth's surface has never been equally fruitful in all its parts—Nature's first blow to the principle of human equality. The pigmy nations as a rule lack either forests or mineral wealth, agricultural facilities or grazing lands and game. Sometimes they lack everything except patriotism. Many years later a New World writer, Mr. Jerome Frank, would exclaim: "Must every little language have a country all its own?" In 1908 Franz Joseph asked himself a similar question as he wondered how long provincial treasuries and pantries could operate on patriotism alone. In short, did independence sometimes exact too high a price? The Emperor thought so, for he placed the welfare of the state above the individual, the family before the strong-willed child.

This earned him much reproach, just as it now was earning for young Karl many a classroom headache. The Archduke had been sent to Prague to obtain a firsthand grasp of Czech politics and aspirations; similarly he must next study Hungary, Galicia, Croatia and the smaller crown lands by visiting each

province in turn. It remained yet to be seen whether his boyish reason could cope with issues which no ancestor had been able to master.

To be sure, in striving to acquaint him with the polyglot Dual Monarchy's history, Karl's teachers had been guilty of an occasional slip. They telescoped vital events and simplified complex national issues, unmindful of Napoleon's adage (as he framed his famous Code): "Oversimplification is the enemy of precision." Still, Karl emerged from his academic years with a working grasp of the problems of empire and an eagerness to take his place in government affairs.

The time was not propitious. Austria was currently preparing a dangerous coup: the annexation of the former Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina over which Vienna had held a protectorate by treaty since 1878. Since the loose arrangement of a protectorate left the two territories an easy prey to covetous neighbors (Russia and Serbia could make use of added Balkan domains) Franz Joseph decided to consolidate his position. Long ago he had stationed Austrian troops and police at Sarajevo, giving him a thirty-year start over his competitors. It was a mere matter of proclamation to finish up the business. But Russia now asked appeasement in the form of trade agreements and a claim on the Dardanelles, while Turkey required financial indemnities. No sooner had Vienna complied with these demands than Serbia threatened mobilization.

Early in 1909 the war clouds darkened. Archduke Karl was recalled from Prague and ordered to join his regiment at Brandeis. Two of his former tutors, von Mattencloit and Wallis, also enlisted, leaving only Count Ledebur and Prince Lobkowitz as members of the archducal suite.

The dreaded fracas, however, did not take the expected

course. Instead of swelling into a general Balkan war, the reverberations of which would shake all Europe, the annexation crisis resolved itself into a teapot storm. Apart from a few local skirmishes among Austrians, Turks and Irredentist Serbs no major battle marked the incorporation of the provinces into the Hapsburg State. By May the excitement had died down and Franz Joseph ordered demobilization of his troops.

For Karl, dreaming of soldierly exploits, this proved a disappointment. Like all young men in all eras of history he had hoped to show his valor and prowess on the field of honor, only to find that there was not the slightest need for such display. However great a hero he had intended to be, heroes were suddenly a drug on the Austrian market. Speedily the troops returned to Vienna, where military drill lost its grim function and became merely an exhilarating routine.

Maneuvers having gone out of fashion, the Archduke cast off the warrior's mask and joined his comrades in cheerier enterprises. He danced, rode to hounds, hunted wild boars in the High Tatra or climbed Tyrolean Alps, while in his heart the dream of soldiering faded into oblivion. Gaiety and adventure now entered his life as Vienna fêted its handsome young men in uniform. Coffeehouses, theaters and music halls regarded the saber-rattling officers their best clientele, particularly when gold braid and buttons were matched by a jingling purse and an illustrious name.

Karl qualified in all respects. He had in addition a boyish charm which drew people to him on sight. His disarming air of innocence wrought special havoc with the fair sex and caused considerable fluttering of hearts. Damsels of every age set their caps for the pink-cheeked and amiable lad whose democratic manner made him their target wherever he appeared.

Before long rumors were afloat concerning romantic entanglements. A member of the chorus at the *Volksooper*, it was whispered, flaunted an emerald necklace she claimed to have received from the Archduke. The fact that the lady admitted later under oath that she had rented the jewels for the purpose of perpetrating a romantic hoax did not quiet wagging tongues. On the contrary, Karl found himself the victim of ever bolder and more fanciful schemes, including threats of suicide from two schoolgirls who vowed they could not live unless he made a choice between them.

Eventually these tidings reached the Emperor's ear. While Vienna smiled in amused tolerance, taking unabashed delight in noting that Maria Josepha had failed to mold her son into a prude, Franz Joseph saw no cause for mirth. He disapproved of "traditional" crown princes, knowing well that such a concept embodied all the depravity afforded by position and wealth. To be sure, Karl was as yet only a prospective heir to the throne of his ancestors. But Franz Joseph remembered Karl's father, reckless Otto, and he was determined that the boy must not follow in the footsteps of that lovable rake.

Not that the Emperor was a prude. When asked to authorize the opening of some new amusement quarter in Vienna's beloved Prater, His Majesty invariably responded with a twinkle and the ingenuous request: "Go ahead, but let me have all the addresses." This liberalism did not, however, extend to the more sordid aspects of night life; unmindful of occasional depravities indulged in during his own youth, Franz Joseph had found virtue with the advancing years. Age and high morals travel hand in hand. Thus, when his own metropolis at times took on too much of a Parisian flavor, and the *Ringstrasse* rivaled French boulevards for sinful incontinence, the Emperor's sense of propriety was outraged.

"Spannt's a Plachen über Wien," he was heard to shout; *"da habt's a ganz grossen Puffl!"* ("Stretch a tent over Vienna and you'll have one big brothel!")

This manifest overstatement promptly brought regeneration in its wake. Remorsefully the city mended its evil ways and assumed, for a time at least, a chaste and pleasing air. Along these same lines Franz Joseph was wont to discipline his family, particularly the vast array of younger princes and archdukes, whose romantic antics upheld a tradition that long ago had rendered the name of Hapsburg synonymous with rakish gaiety. Karl seemed to be no exception to his rule. The young man, His Majesty decided, would bear watching.

It was a merry escapade in the Semmering woods which brought matters to a head. Karl had gone on a week-end excursion with a troupe of theatrical students from the Vienna *Uberbrettl*. On returning from this jaunt he was ordered to report at once to the Hofburg where Franz Joseph waited in dynastic wrath, while his adjutant, Count Josef Bombelles, ushered in the visitor.

"I demand," the Emperor roared, "that you render account for your extraordinary conduct!"

Karl had no difficulty in rendering account. It had been a splendid outing which, he felt sure, his great uncle would have enjoyed attending. In fact, he urged Franz Joseph to visit the Semmering on his very next holiday.

"The air is marvelous," ventured the Archduke.

"I'll thank you not to pick the air that I am to breathe," sputtered Franz Joseph. "What I want to know is—were there any women present?"

The question had been directed not at Karl but at von Polzer-Hoditz who accompanied the young man. No, von Polzer-Hoditz did not remember seeing any ladies.

"Even so," grunted His Majesty unconvinced, "after the party returned to Vienna a certain prima donna held one of her notorious champagne suppers to which my more—er—youthful relatives never fail to be invited. Could there be a connection?"

"Oh, no," protested von Polzer-Hoditz, horrified. "It was mere coincidence, Your Majesty. After the party returned to Vienna the Archduke drove me home and then drove himself to the barracks."

That Karl might easily have extended this program and spent the night carousing on the *Ring* did not occur to the old courtier. Or, if it had occurred to him, the ethics of friendship and loyal servitude imposed a discreet silence. At all events the Emperor did not push the inquisition further. He could only hope that Maria Josepha's training had borne fruit and that the Archduke's virtue was insured through a plethora of maternal prayers. Certainly Karl did not seem to be burdened with guilt; he beamed at his great uncle and met each question with flawless composure, not to say relish, quite as though his clear blue eyes had never gazed on evil.

Often as not, such innocent demeanor marked the rogue. Franz Joseph resolved to take no stock in outward appearances, nor was he impressed by the testimony of a garrulous and biased factotum like von Polzer-Hoditz. The fact that Karl could muster a regiment of boon-companions who would vouch for him with their lives, if necessary, proved nothing beyond the young man's gift for beguiling friends who could be depended upon in time of trouble. It was a Hapsburg gift, familiar through the ages. Franz Joseph himself had once made use of it and so he was not to be taken in.

"*Ich kenne meine Pappenheimer,*" uttered His Majesty, employing a favorite colloquialism. ("I know my Pappenheimers!"—i.e., human nature.)

He closed the interview, scowling. But behind his scowl there lurked the trace of a smile as with a gentle tap on the shoulder the Emperor pushed Karl through the door.

In the crowded anteroom the Archduke drew a deep breath. "Polzer," he sighed, "you are a pearl beyond price!"

The courtier was covered with confusion. "Your Imperial Highness is given to exaggeration—"

"Nonsense, Polzer. You shall be rewarded. What is your favorite drink?"

"*Eierkognak*," admitted von Polzer-Hoditz shyly. ("Egg-nog—")

Thereupon the Archduke slipped an arm through that of his companion and both men hurried from the Hofburg shadows to the sunny streets below. Outside, the linden trees were in bloom and all Vienna seemed to be going by on foot. The Archduke's carriage was waiting, but Karl gave way to a sudden impulse.

"Let's walk, Polzer," he cried. "I want to feel that I am a part of Vienna as much as that ragpicker on the curb!"

Whistling a tune in waltz time he led the way to Sacher's *Kaffeehaus* on the *Ring*.

CHAPTER 5

AFTER the Semmering incident the Archduke expected a tightening of the reins. He feared that there would be an end to boulevard frivolities, to camaraderie and freedom; he sensed the return of the old days with their schoolboy restrictions and their dull round of duties. He might even be sent back to his mother, which seemed the hardest punishment of all. It was not that he lacked affection for his mother. But, Karl felt, only a saint or an early Christian martyr could live with Maria Josepha.

As for the benevolence which (during the Hofburg interview) had cloaked Franz Joseph's anger, Karl was not reassured by it. When the Emperor called anyone a *Pappenheimer* the worst could be expected.

The Archduke spent a quiet week expecting it. He had been overdisciplined in childhood and thus had acquired the habit of meeting authority without defiance. But army life and the recent Balkan campaign had wrought a change. Of late Karl had grown restive. Somewhere in his being a solemn decision was taking shape, like an ultimatum delivered unto himself: he would not bow forever.

As it happened Karl worried in vain, for no punitive measures issued from the Hofburg. Franz Joseph seemed not only to have buried the hatchet but to have forgotten its very existence. Instead of scoring the young culprit for his sins the Emperor had hit upon a far more practical scheme: the Archduke must be married off as soon as possible to a lady of appropriately royal



Photo Korthy, Vienna.

Princess Zita of Bourbon-Parma at the time of her betrothal.



Photo Korthy, Vienna.

Archduke Karl at the time of his betrothal.

blood. There was nothing like domesticity to tame unruly hearts and lull hot passion.

On Karl's next visit to Schönbrunn, where he occasionally supped with his great uncle, the Emperor asked a question.

"My boy, how would you like to take a trip?"

Travel was every archduke's meat. For generations Italy, France, England and the Near East had been overrun by visiting Hapsburgs whose *Wanderlust* drove them from home. Karl proved no exception.

"At Pianore in the valley of the Po," continued His Majesty, "the Duchess Antonia of Bourbon-Parma keeps a jolly house. She wants you to pay her a visit."

Franz Joseph did not add that the prolific Duchess was surrounded by offspring, among them a marriageable daughter named Zita. In view of what followed it was as well that he had kept this disclosure to himself.

Karl, unconcerned about an itinerary so long as he could set forth to see the world, obeyed instructions and arrived at Pianore in a cheerful mood. After a fortnight of sight-seeing he penned a glowing letter home. This letter opened with an apostrophe to the beauties of the Italian scene, continuing with the enumeration of the staggering Bourbon-Parma clan, and ending in a rapturous paean to Zita. Antonia's lovely daughter had put an end to the Archduke's *Wanderlust*. Karl wanted to return to Vienna by the next train, with Zita for his bride.

Franz Joseph chortled to himself and nodded his head in benign approval. He scrawled a quick reply, voicing discreet amazement both at the fecundity of the Parma household and at Karl's susceptibility to female wiles, but he lost no time welcoming the Princess into the family circle. The Bourbon blood, though thinned by diverse unroyal unions, still ran acceptably

through Zita's pedigree and placed her among the elect whom an imperial scion might wed.

On June 14, 1911, the betrothal ceremony took place at Pia-nore. Telegraph wires carried the news abroad, hinting that the wedding would be held in the fall. Plainly Franz Joseph did not believe in long engagements, which put a needless strain on the impatient lovers, apart from the fact that His Majesty wished to see Karl safely anchored in the strait of matrimony. Though guilty of connivance in bringing the two young people together, the monarch felt reasonably sure that Karl's infatuation was genuine and that a repetition of the Rudolf tragedy need not be feared.

In October of the same year the marriage was celebrated in Austria and Vienna caught its first glimpse of the royal bride. She was a slender girl with small regular features and dark eyes that were set wide apart. Her sable hair had been pinned up into the full pompadour of the period, worn at a backward slanting angle by the young but with a bold forward dip by more experienced matrons. Over this structure of hair the bridal veil and diadem rested in a precarious position which emphasized Zita's touching freshness and naïveté. The young girl blushed, she was a trifle awkward, but withal she held herself erect in a manner that bespoke spirit.

Altogether, Vienna approved. The foreigner would make an archduchess to the purple born.

Illustrious guests came to the wedding. Among them, rosy-cheeked and in his customary wrinkled uniform, was the current King Friedrich August of Saxony, brother of Maria Josepha and uncle to the bridegroom. This unpretentious monarch had figured in journalistic headlines nearly a decade earlier when his wife, Louise of Toscana, eloped—first with Monsieur Giron,

Belgian tutor of her five children, and later with Enrico Toselli, Italian violinist and composer of the famed *Rimpianto*. Although Europe at the time had been scandalized, Friedrich took the double blow philosophically.

"*Ach*," he said, wiping a fringe of beer from his mustache, "between the two I hope she can make up her mind!"

Nor did sad memories haunt him. He attended weddings regularly and always prophesied good fortune to brides and grooms. Soon superstition began to travel in his wake. The eccentric King who never seemed to think about himself brought luck to all who came into contact with him.

Dresden merchants and manufacturers were well aware of this fact and it had long been common practice to invite Friedrich August on tours of inspection through the business quarter of his city. This the King did with friendly acquiescence, though he seldom spoke, for he was a man of few words. Once after attending the opening of a tannery the silent monarch was admonished by an adjutant to make some comment to the proprietor and his assistant who waited for a word of recognition. Hastily Friedrich August complied. With a beaming smile he addressed the pair in broadest Saxon:

"*Na, Ihr zwee Beedel*" ("Well, you two chaps!") Thereupon he stepped into his car and drove back to the palace.

As for Karl and Zita, they welcomed Friedrich August's stout Saxon blessing. It was destined to stand them in good stead through future years when Fate dealt its harsh blows and broke their hearts. In sparing monosyllables the King promised them the Rainbow's End.

To the bride (who, it was plain to see, lacked all trace of flippant coquetry) Friedrich August did not address his usual bit of advice, which had been culled from his own marital

mishap: "Remember—all men are different; all husbands are the same. . . ." Zita, the Saxon uncle told himself, had been born for wifehood. As far as she was concerned, soulful French tutors and itinerant fiddlers would be wasting their time.

After the wedding the young couple took up residence first in the garrison town of Brandeis and later at Kolomea, where Karl continued to serve as a humble captain of the Seventh Dragoons. On November 1, 1912, he was raised to the rank of major in the Thirty-ninth Infantry Regiment, with orders to take over the command of its first battalion at the Vienna barracks. Thus the Archduke returned to the capital and took up quarters at Hetzendorf. The change was made in considerable haste since, only nineteen days later, Zita came down in childbirth and was delivered of a healthy boy.

With the destiny of a throne clearly in view it was expected that the baby would receive a traditional Hapsburg name, preferably that of the Emperor. As an alternative Maria Josepha, now a happy grandmother, proposed a roster of the Saints. But Karl did not baptize his son to flatter emperors or saints; the child was named Otto, after his worldly grandsire.

Almost from infancy this second Otto could lay claim to beauty. He had the wide eyes of his mother, her high cheekbones, her pert snub nose which lent such hauteur to the tranquil face. The mouth was well-shaped, slightly pouting, yet without trace of that famed "Hapsburg lip" seen on so few Hapsburgs. It was this mouth, together with a veiled overcast gaze under dark heavy lashes, which caused nursemaids, palace attendants, relatives and the public at large to exclaim:

"It is Otto, *der schönste Erzherzog*, once again!"

Delight reigned at Hetzendorf as well as in the parks of Reichenau and Wartholz where the little Prince could be seen

taking his airing. Often as not Zita herself accompanied the child and pushed the imperial pram, for the Archduchess proved a devoted parent. Never in her life had she known what it is to be alone, for she had grown up surrounded by brothers and sisters in a home that rang with laughter and noise. Automatically the family embodied for her the picture of the world. Motherhood became her fetish. As a tiny girl she had tended her-dolls with loving attention and their number was increased each Christmas until Zita herself could think of no more names to go around. These dolls had brought many cares; they were naughty, indolent, cantankerous or gravely ill in turn, and the youthful mother had had her cross to bear while nursing, scrubbing or spanking them into proper shape. But she had faced these tribulations sternly and had enjoyed herself no end while facing them.

The shifting of scenes from childish play to adult duty became for Zita a mere step. If the doll nursery had predestined her for motherhood on a large scale her own will and desire accomplished the rest.

A year after the birth of Otto she went through her second pregnancy with even less trouble than her first. This time a girl was born and named Adelheid, which signified "the noble." Alas, neither in babyhood nor during years to come, would Adelheid call for exclamations of delight when she was wheeled outdoors for sunshine and public inspection. She bore not the faintest resemblance to her curly-headed handsome brother whose golden hair now rivalled the bright halo on some Florentine cherub. She looked instead like Grandmother Maria Josepha, or perhaps this would be more accurate still, like Maria Josepha's brother Friedrich August. The likeness was startling, even to the bulbous red nose.

For a small baby to look like Friedrich August was bad enough, opined court gossips. But for a young lady—and a princess to boot—who must one day capture a husband it was disastrous. Even Zita, farsighted like most mothers, promptly envisioned the future of this daughter, who as yet cooed contentedly in her crib. A trifle discouraged, the maternal heart took stock of such defects as might be remedied by outward help: the wisps of stringy hair were brushed into a ringlet above the naked brow, while the pale eyes and cheeks were offset by bonnets and beribboned dresses of the prettiest hues. But nothing much was gained, for the stubborn hairs snapped back to their original place and the bright frocks served only to accent the child's own lack of color.

But these matters did not worry the Archduchess long. For, by the time the hopelessness of Adelheid's baby coiffure had been accepted without further struggle, Zita was once more in league with the stork.

Before this third birth, however, which in the Hapsburg family circle would be viewed as mere routine, there occurred a double death that rocked Europe and changed the face of the entire civilized world. It was the Sarajevo murder, on June 28, 1914, of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, the former Countess Chotek.

Although political strife had long been brewing in the neighboring provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Heir Apparent had been warned not to appear there at the scheduled summer maneuvers, the news of his assassination came as a brutal shock. At Hetzendorf consternation reigned. Unable for the moment to grasp the full significance of what had happened, Karl hastened to Schönbrunn, where he found himself already in the rôle of his uncle's successor. Before the body of Franz

Ferdinand was homeward bound the torn link in the dynastic chain had been securely mended and Austria-Hungary bowed to a new Imperial Heir.

But far more than the minor question of Hapsburg continuity was at stake, as political developments soon proved. The deed of one lone anarchist, Gavrilo Princip, who dreamed of Slav liberation and a greater Serbia dominating the Balkans, set off the spark for a general conflagration. The year 1914 was destined to witness the advent of the first World War. . . .

In the nightmare of events which marked the outbreaking hostilities, Karl and Zita found themselves placed in a confusing rôle. The Archduke had been invested with the important rank of Crown Prince over a realm at war. He stood beside an aging Emperor whose job he would be expected to take over almost any day and on short notice. Yet he was utterly at sea concerning the functions of that job. His predecessor, Franz Ferdinand, had been too jealous of the younger man; he had had no interest in teaching a rival who might one day step into the shoes which he intended to reserve for his own sons.

Emperor Franz Joseph, on the other hand, had held the job of kingship too long. He had grown old in it, rigid, petrified. A tale made the rounds of Vienna that at the outbreak of hostilities in 1914 his ministers notified the white-haired monarch at Schönbrunn:

"Majestät, es gibt Krieg." ("Your Majesty, there's a war.")

To which Franz Joseph, lost in senile memories of the defeat of 1866, is said to have replied:

"Krieg hab't's? Reoht hab't's. Hau't mir nur die Preissen!" ("You've got a war? You're right. Just beat up those Prussians for me!") The fact that Austria and Germany were now allies served only to add piquancy to the story.

At all events Karl could learn nothing from his great uncle beyond a bearing of true majesty and a frozen poise with which to meet whatever Destiny held in store, even defeat. Was it possible, Karl wondered, that this glacial poise sprang from an expectation of defeat? He would never know the answer. Franz Joseph, if he foresaw the twilight of his realm, guarded the secret deep within his heart.

But there were others from whom the Heir Apparent soon gleaned an insight into the future of the monarchy. Count Leopold von Berchtold, Austrian Foreign Minister, made no bones about the situation. During the Bosnian crisis Berchtold had stated in a memorandum to the Cabinet:

“Between us and Serbia today stands the great Southern [Yugo] Slav problem, which increasingly clamors for a definitive solution. In view of the unflinching consistency and self-confidence with which Belgrade works for the realization of the Pan-Slav idea, this solution, so far as one can foresee, must be one of force. Either there will be very little left of Serbia, or Austria will be shaken to her foundations.”

These words came as an unexpected revelation to the Archduke who had grown up with a typical schoolboy faith in an invincible fatherland. It was shocking to hear that Austria, descended from the ancient Holy Roman Empire, was vulnerable, and that the Hapsburg realm could disintegrate on no graver provocation than Uncle Ferdi's death at Sarajevo. Karl shuddered at the plausibility of Berchtold's analysis of these and other questions. He was further appalled to learn that not Austria alone but most of the countries around her risked annihilation in a general European war, yet every government had

seemed willing to take the gamble. The home papers screamed certain victory. The enemy, being in the wrong, would lose. The whole so-called civilized world was ready to march and no earthly power could prevent it from doing so. It was as simple as that.

For the rest, history took its grim course without consulting Karl. By the end of July Armageddon dominated the scene and the sweet summer air was rent with cries of battle. Sunshine and starlight shone with equal dispassion on young men's bodies strewn about the blood-drenched fields of Flanders, Galicia and the Masurian Swamps. Even before the arrival of autumn Europe was ready to reap a crimson harvest.

The Archduke Karl had been sent with his regiment to the Eastern Front in the Lemberg and Przemyśl sector. However, after the first opening skirmishes it was decided that the Heir Apparent ought not to be exposed to daily peril, since in the event of his death Austria would have been hard put to appoint a fourth Crown Prince. In consequence the Archduke found himself recalled and subsequently attached to the High Command at Teschen. From here, although unable to take part in decisive action, he was to gain his first knowledge of military strategy.

Here too he made a startling discovery which changed his concept of the Central Powers and their part in the war. At first it had been Austria's struggle against Serbia which had caused Germany to offer aid, always keeping in mind that Russia mobilized with Serbia. But presently the picture seemed to have shifted, so that it soon became Germany's war in which the Hapsburg armies were allowed to give assistance. The Prussian Chancellor, Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg, let a strange cat out of the bag when he proclaimed, in his Reichstag

speech, August, 1914, that the world would at last witness a "fight to the finish between Germans (*Germanen* in the racial sense) and Slavs." This pronouncement was nothing short of a blunder, at least so far as Austria was concerned, since better than one third of the Hapsburg armies consisted of Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croats, Ruthenians—all of them loyal Slavs who stood prepared to bleed for the Central Powers. While von Bethmann-Hollweg had meant to strike at Russian rivalry for control of the Far East when he declared Germany's political hand, he likewise displayed wretched diplomacy in laying such cards on the table. His words were an insult to a sizeable portion of Germany's own allies, at a time when Berlin had none too many.

Although the Archduke Karl's opinions had little official weight they became colored by this incident. He was not a Slav and he had no reason to take offense at Bethmann-Hollweg's lack of tact, yet he could not refrain from scoring the Prussian boner. How, he asked angrily, could Austria's heterogeneous troops be expected to show enthusiasm for such a cause? The very issues had been deliberately confused. Instead of a punitive campaign against Serbia for the murder of Franz Ferdinand there now loomed a Pan-Germanic program of expansion before Austria's astonished eyes. In this program Hapsburg no longer played a leading part; Franz Joseph's armies had been cast in a supporting rôle, with the director's bâton being wielded from Berlin.

Already there existed an organization called the Pan-German League which openly gave voice to the doctrine of "large areas" whereby the world must be divided up among a few progressive and competent nations. Professor Ernst Hasse, an advocate of this theory, offered the United States as an outstanding example.

"Beginning with the Thirteen Colonies," he argued, "the American nation might well have been satisfied. Yet look at it today! Where there would otherwise exist a medley of small separate countries the present bloc of a world power has been raised. Land-grabbing? Acquisitiveness? Greed? Assuredly. . . . But what economic and political wisdom in the end!"

In his treatise "*Deutsche Politik*" Hasse further advocated a Central European customs union including Germany, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria-Hungary and Rumania. He advised attaching Turkey to the German Empire, as well as a slice of China to provide a permanent outlet for the products of German industry. British policy served as justification of this plan; inasmuch as England excluded all foreign influence from her sphere of power, Germany must do the same.

The ideology of Hasse found a vigorous echo in Dr. Albert Ritter, a secretary of the League, who wrote under the pen name of Kurt von Winterstetten. A Winterstetten pamphlet captioned "*Berlin-Bagdad*" contained the following proposal:

"Austria-Hungary should be joined to the German Empire in a new form as a federal State. The thing to be aimed at is the transformation of the Triple Alliance from an insurance society into a co-operative society. To this end an active, may we say, quietly aggressive foreign policy is to be recommended as a most urgent necessity."

The relative conservatism of these theories led to more daring views in a propagandist volume entitled "*Wenn ich Kaiser wäre!*" ("If I Were Emperor!") by Wilhelm Frymann.

But the most unvarnished revelations on this subject were not of wartime vintage. As far back as 1900 the Odin Publishing House in Munich released several thousand copies of a broadside which mapped out a hypothetical campaign:

"Let German troops march on Bohemia and Upper Austria; Austria must be conquered by Germany and the Imperial Crown transferred to the Hohenzollerns. The German Kaiser can thus exercise unlimited authority in Austria through the agency of officials, whom he would choose from the population at his own discretion. . . . Austria will then be Germanized by the most vigorous means, with the exception of the Czech districts of Bohemia, which will be transformed into an enclosed stronghold for the Czechs."

From this assortment of reading matter which drifted across the frontier and into Karl's hands the Archduke drew a dejected conclusion. Victory for the Central Powers would mean as little to Austria as defeat! Disintegration loomed ahead if a triumphant Russia swept westward no less than if unbeaten Germany launched on her conquest of the East. The wonder was that Austria's Slavic peoples did not desert in droves. Were they so blind as not to see that loyalty to the Dual Monarchy, regardless of the outcome, spelled their own doom?

Karl did not understand. Nor would he understand until a day, not very distant, when Emperor Franz Joseph was no more. For in the old man, whose rule of almost seven decades outlasted that of England's Queen Victoria, the spirit of the Danube realm found its crystallization. He was as Austrian as the *Wiener Wald*, and gentle like the Föhn breeze from the Tyrol which caressed and molded the national character. Yet he was majesty incarnate, the last true apostolic king. In him the dynastic miracle found its apotheosis.

No, while Franz Joseph lived, the fantastic waltz lands of the Hapsburgs would not fall apart.

PART TWO

THE EMPEROR

CHAPTER 6

FRANZ JOSEPH's end marked the finish of an imperial legend.

Death came to the aged monarch on November 21, 1916, when the Great War was well into its third year. The world paused briefly to note his passing, but blood ran on the battlefields and men's minds must return to slaughter. Newspaper columns carried a short obituary between more pressing reports that poured in hourly from the trenches. It was the epitome of anticlimax, for Death had stolen his own show.

In this incredible hour of which neither the present nor the future would take particular notice, the Archduke Karl succeeded to the Crown. All attention had focused for months upon the Franco-British offensive on the Somme, the terrible siege of Verdun, the Italian advance at Gorizia and the Russian deadlock on the Eastern Front. So deafening was the din of war that of an ancient formula "The King is Dead; Long Live the King!" only the first words could be heard.

Alone and without precedent in this situation Karl took the reins of government into his wavering hand. He was twenty-nine years old, shy, inexperienced. But in his heart burned the fiery ideals of youth, the dream of a world more endurable than that which at the moment was crumbling into ruin. Regardless of the scarcity of listeners who would attend his assumption of office, the new monarch drew up a manifesto to be published not only in Vienna but throughout the provincial capitals as well as along both the Italian and Galician fronts. It ran:

"TO MY PEOPLES

"Together with my family and loyal subjects I stand deeply shocked at the bier of the noble ruler who guarded the destinies of the Monarchy for close on seventy years.

"By the Almighty's grace he was called to the throne in early youth and given strength to devote himself, despite great sorrows, to the duties imposed by his royal office and by the love of the nation. His wisdom, clear sight and benevolence created, amid many hazards, a basis for internal peace and free development; his hand guided Austria-Hungary through long years of prosperity to a seat of power whence today we face our enemies in unison of heart and of spirit.

"It is my duty now to continue his work. I am compelled to occupy the throne of my ancestors in troubled times. The end is not yet in sight, but the false hope that the Monarchy will be disrupted must not gain ground. I am at one with my peoples in the firm determination to seek peace and the survival of our country. . . .

"In invoking the blessing of Heaven for my House and my Peoples I swear before God that I will be a loyal steward of the heritage of my ancestors. *I shall do all in my power to end the horrors and sacrifices of war at the earliest possible moment, and to restore the blessings of peace as soon as honor, the interests of our Allies and the co-operation of our Enemies will permit.*

"I shall be a just ruler, respecting the Constitution and guarding equality before the Law. I will protect the spiritual needs of all, ensuring for the working man the fruits of his honest labors. The symbol of the Crown, the love and the trust built up by my predecessor, will be a precious heritage to give me courage for this task.

"I am convinced of the indestructible vitality of Austria-Hungary. With a deep love for my Peoples I consecrate my life and strength to her service. . . .

"KARL, I. R."

The manifesto was released on the evening of November 22.



Photo Korthy, Vienna.

The little Crown Prince Otto between his parents at the funeral of Emperor Franz Joseph in 1916. (Behind heavily veiled Empress Zita: Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria and King Ludwig III of Bavaria.)



Photo Beller Rezső, Budapest.

Emperor Karl, being anointed as King of Hungary on Royal Hill in Budapest.

Into its composition had gone the combined efforts of three men: the Emperor, Aulic Counsellor Baron Matscheko, and Prime Minister Dr. Ernst von Koerber. Karl's contribution, apart from the pledge to serve the will of the nation, had been confined to an emphatic promise that the war must end at the earliest possible chance. Baron Matscheko supplied the stylistic form, whereas von Koerber took care that the traditional clauses contained in any standard accession speech were not lacking. As a result, despite Karl's unconventional and sincere interpolation, the manifesto as a whole appeared stereotyped. Its well-intentioned platitudes could not conceal a barrenness of new ideas.

But where was the young monarch to obtain new ideas? He had, up to Franz Joseph's last illness, been kept away from Vienna and from all contact with government affairs. His military duties had thrust him sporadically first to the South Tyrol as leader of an army corps, then as special commander to the Eastern Front, and lastly, at Teschen, into the rôle of quiescent spectator under the roof of G.H.Q. This had not given him much insight into the management of the complex empire he must one day rule. And yet, long before anyone else in Austrian officialdom, Karl recognized that his empire's chances for survival had been jeopardized on the very first day of war. The skillful turning of tables in regard to the issues involved, with the shifting of the center of gravity from Vienna to Berlin, had exposed Austria's negligible status. Karl knew a second fiddle when he heard one; it played a melancholy tune.

His immediate concern as Emperor became the consolidation of his imperiled realm. He did not share the German Kaiser's proud urge for victory because whatever victory the Central Powers won would accrue to Prussia's glory. Had not Prussia

the mightier army, finer discipline, fiercer ambition? Beside this fabulous ally Austria was but an inept and easygoing clod. Even now a pointed anecdote was told in German trenches, inspired by the quick triumphs of Hindenburg, Mackensen, Ludendorff. It bespoke the self-assurance of Berlin as borne out in a hypothetical conversation between a Prussian and an Austrian trooper. To wit:

“German: ‘Our guns are better than yours!’

Austrian: ‘So they are.’

German: ‘We win more battles!’

Austrian: ‘You do indeed.’

German: ‘Our generals are greater!’

Austrian: ‘Absolutely.’

German: ‘Well—what are *you* proud of?’

Austrian: ‘We have a more remarkable ally. . . .’”

The tenor of contemporary jokes served sometimes as a barometer from which national sentiment might be read. Karl pondered the reading and drew from it the keynote for his policy. This policy, confused and experimental at first, would focus on a single purpose—peace. In pursuing this course the new monarch took his cue from one of Franz Joseph’s last official remarks. Shortly before his death the old Emperor had said to Freiherr von Georgi, National Minister of Defense:

“I’ll look on at this war for another three months, and then I’ll put an end to it.”

Yes, Karl meant to put an end to it. But first he must tighten the loose bonds that joined the Empire’s peoples, and in attempting to do this he stumbled at once into a grave error. Hungary’s Prime Minister, Count István Tisza, had hurried to Vienna on the day Karl’s manifesto had been published, in order to persuade the young monarch to arrange for an immediate

coronation in Budapest. This would invest Karl with the Holy Crown of Saint Stephen and assure him of the loyalty of the entire Magyar race. It seemed a splendid idea. The Hapsburg Emperors had always followed their accession in Vienna with similar ceremonies, taking the oath of office in Prague, Budapest and other parts of the realm. This satisfied provincial pride and gave a general assurance of fair representation before the Crown.

But the war years had made a difference. After his great-uncle's death Karl had ascended to the throne automatically and without the bother or expense of elaborate ceremonials. He had dispensed with the pomp and ritual of an Austrian coronation so as to save his subjects the burden of an added tax. Was it consistent with his scruples to accept the Budapest invitation? What would the remaining crown lands say? There was another ticklish point: for years Hungary had been viewed with jealousy because, by virtue of her size and economic importance, she held a preferred place in the Hapsburg federation. The very term "Dual Monarchy" gave offense to minorities who did not cavil at the idea of empire. Moreover, the Hungarian Constitution contained certain privileges which were in conflict with the rights of other constituents, particularly those of Czechs, Austro-Germans, Croats and South Slavs. Under the aging Franz Joseph these inconsistencies had been glossed over, due to the personal aura that surrounded the veteran Emperor. An attitude of *laissez-faire*, similar to England's policy of "muddling through," had prevailed for generations. This shirking and bungling was both natural and national; it would endure as long as the balmy Vienna breeze. "*Weiter wursteln*," the statesman Count Eduard Taaffe pronounced the characteristic Austrian practice of hit-or-miss government. ("Keeping on with the sausage-making.")

But in 1916 matters were not conducive to "*wursteln*." The realization that German victory spelled ruin to the Slavic peoples everywhere had struck a fatal blow at the foundations of the Hapsburg State. Czech regiments were now deserting in a body and joining their Russian brethren. Croats and South Slavs fraternized with their racial kin in Serbia. At such a time as this it was extremely dangerous to emphasize Hungary's status of a royal favorite. Before contemplating a coronation in Budapest it would have been advisable to alter the Magyar Constitution and to eradicate all points of dissension between it and the statutes of the remaining provinces.

With these points of dissension Karl was not sufficiently familiar. His knowledge of history had been acquired in time of peace, before his own claims to a throne had loomed in prospect, and under the patriarchal régime of an old man whose mistakes met with kindly tolerance. No one at Schönbrunn had foreseen that after Franz Joseph's death another era must begin, an era which dispensed with "muddling."

It was in good faith that Emperor Karl listened to Tisza's proposal. He agreed to comply with the wishes of the Magyar nation and to follow the government deputation to Budapest. On December 27, Karl, Zita and the little Crown Prince Otto entered Hungary amid wild cries of "*Eljen!*" ("Hail!"). They waited at the Royal Palace in Buda until the hour of the coronation proper, which had been fixed for the thirtieth. The service took place in the Church of Mathias Corvinus, with the Prince Primate of Hungary, Dr. Czernoch, and Count Tisza officiating.

The trappings for this ceremony were fraught with tradition and legend. Karl wore the venerable "Cloak of Saint Stephen," although the actual garment of that name had been worn out and lost before Maria Theresa's time. The mantle now in use

was really that of Stephen's wife, Gisela, who had embroidered it with her own hands in the year 1031.

The Sacred Crown had been presented to Hungary by Pope Sylvester at a slightly earlier date, the year 1000. It was supplemented by a headband encrusted with sapphires and enamel plaques representing the Saints. This piece had been the gift of the Byzantine Emperor Michael Dukas to King Géza I, and it was especially consecrated to the Virgin Mary.

The Scepter and Orb likewise had not belonged to Stephen but to some later monarch of the Fourteenth Century, while the Sword (supposedly a relic of Attila, King of the Huns) showed by its Gothic design that it was of comparatively recent manufacture, namely late 1600. In short, the Magyar crown jewels were not authentic.

Nevertheless these vestments and appurtenances carried an almost mystic connotation which served as a clue to Hungarian nationalism. A thousand-year-old people glorying in a thousand-year-old past must have a fitting symbol. The Holy Crown with its crooked cross (bent by a thief who once made off with the royal treasure) was an object of worship; the trappings surrounding it, though slightly fraudulent, had been canonized through tradition.

Much ado accompanied an Hungarian investiture to kingship. Good Magyars felt that anyone anointed and clothed in the historic vestments of Saint Stephen was thereafter inviolable and sanctified before mankind. Theirs was an ancient concept of monarchy—not empire—by Divine Right. The Kings of Hungary ranked next to the Almighty.

But certain inconsistencies cropped up from time to time and marred the record, since on repeated occasions both crown and mantle had graced a wearer whom the people did not like.

Thus, on May 15, 1440, one Ladislaus Posthumus had been solemnly crowned at Stuhlweissenburg by the Archbishop of Gran, yet disapproving Magyars promptly fashioned a spare coronet to place on the head of another candidate, Vladislav of Poland, the following June. If Ladislaus Posthumus, whose crown was the "holy" one, depended on its mystic power to see him through, he was sadly mistaken. The Hungarian masses, like those of other lands, were practical realists who could explode or revive a convenient fantasy at will.

It was something for Karl to think about. He had been rushed ("trapped" is the better word) by Tisza into a coronation that strengthened Magyar dominance while alienating the remaining peoples of his realm. In winning the King, Tisza had employed shrewd tactics. He had heard of Karl's determination to make peace at the earliest possible moment. Hungary, he declared, was of the same mind; but Hungary could not legally sanction any political move of the Austrian Emperor unless he first took the oath at Budapest. What would happen to Karl's pacifist plan if Magyar troops continued fighting? In the interest of humanity and peace, argued Tisza, the formality of a coronation must take place.

To Karl it appeared quite reasonable. He had heeded Tisza's call and had come to Buda for the sake of his humanitarian dream. The heavy crown (Saint Stephen must have been brachycephalic) rested precariously on his head while, mounted on a charger, the King ascended the Royal Hill and pointed his sword to the four winds. Gisela's mantle hung boldly from his shoulder, defying critics who might quibble over its intrinsic worth.

For Zita the occasion was enormously important. The slender girl from Parma had restored the faded glories of her own

house. Seated upon a throne (with a forward-tilted crown atop her brow, which made her look like the Black Queen from *Alice in Wonderland*) Zita held herself proudly erect. Her set jaw seemed a trifle prominent, as though a new sense of personal value had left its imprint on the still almost adolescent face. A train of velvet and ermine fell from her shoulders like the trailing plumage of a peacock, stiffened by the wearer's motionless poise. The Queen of Hungary was at the moment not visibly concerned with her husband's thoughts on war and peace. She seemed rather to be listening to the pulsation of her imperious Bourbon blood.

Beside her, in satin doublet and fur shako, stood the four-year-old Crown Prince Otto. His golden hair and doll-like features made him the embodiment of a storybook princelet. At sight of this regal child the populace burst forth in vociferous acclaim, causing the coronation carriage to be halted again and again on its procession through the city. It was young Otto, rather than his parents, who swept the Magyar nation off its feet.

Three winters of strife and privation had turned Budapest into a gloomy city, but for the moment the horrors of war were forgotten. The trappings of Saint Stephen had been dusted off and put to work again. Their indefinable magic effluvium was casting its ancient spell.

Karl hoped the spell could be depended upon.

CHAPTER 7

ON returning to Vienna the new Emperor-King was faced with a crisis. His Prime Minister for Austria, Dr. von Koerber, had resigned.

The reason for this action was clear enough, since Koerber had been out of sympathy with the Budapest proceedings. The Hungarian coronation, he had argued, would give new emphasis to dualism, and dualism was the very evil that any federal government must avoid. By not avoiding it, Karl had stirred up an old harassing issue: Empire versus Dual Monarchy, Hapsburg's traditional woe. The balance of Karl's reign would be spent in a continued struggle to overcome this initial handicap which he had brought upon himself, and the consequences of which he could no longer escape.

His immediate task was the formation of another cabinet, for which he could choose only the few men in public life with whom he had become to some degree familiar. He had already appointed as his own private secretary a friend and trusted advisor, Count von Polzer-Hoditz, whose services to the imperial household dated from Karl's earliest youth. Next, Prince Konrad Hohenlohe, former Minister of Finance, had been called to the post of First Court Chamberlain. As for the government offices, Freiherr von Burian took up Hohenlohe's erstwhile portfolio, while Count Ottokar Czernin, ex-Ambassador to Bucharest, rose to Minister for Foreign Affairs (the rank held by Berchtold at the outbreak of the War). There remained Koerber's vacant chair, the most difficult of all, to fill. But the

Emperor showed unexpected wisdom in his choice; he appointed a Bohemian nobleman of pronounced Czech sympathies, Count Heinrich Clam-Martinec, to the job of Prime Minister. Through this arrangement the general tension was considerably eased, since Prague as well as the southern Slav capitals noted that a concession had been made in their behalf.

Having successfully steered his craft of state around this dangerous cliff, the Emperor hoped for clear sailing from now on. He planned to follow a safe course by going, as it were, from coronation to coronation, so that all reproaches concerning favoritism toward Hungary might be silenced. He would begin by donning the Crown of Charlemagne and swearing fealty to Austria's Constitution; next, he would clasp the scepter of Saint Wenceslas in Prague, and so on through the provinces until the whole realm was appeased. It seemed an ideal solution.

But the scheme died inchoate due to the Emperor's own pangs of conscience. On closer inspection of the Austrian and Bohemian Constitutions their flagrant contradiction to his recent Hungarian pledges became at once apparent. It was impossible to take a public oath either in Vienna or Prague without being branded as a deliberate perjurer.

Count von Polzer-Hoditz described the royal dilemma in unvarnished terms. His records state: "In actual fact the Emperor Karl never took the solemn oath to uphold the Austrian Constitution. *He simply could not.*"

This meant that he remained a sovereign through the right of inheritance alone, rather than through power of Parliament. It meant also that with the slightest change of public favor in any province except Hungary he stood defenseless and alone. He could be discarded at a moment's notice.

It was a bleak alternative, and one few men in history have

faced. Karl's own ancestors, like the kings, moguls, dictators and presidents of other lands, had cheerfully sworn oaths and made glib promises in the full knowledge that their pledges could not be redeemed. Discrepancies between political preludes and aftermaths were the rule, not the exception. But Karl lacked a fundamental requisite for leadership—the ability to contradict himself without batting an eye.

This honesty and determination to remain consistent in his conduct placed dangerous shackles on the Emperor. Having signed the inaugural diploma in Budapest, whereby he bound himself to *preserve the integrity of the lands of the Hungarian Crown*, he could no longer champion those minorities who had complaints against Magyar dominance. Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia—they must continue as stepchildren of the realm instead of winning equal rights before the Hapsburg throne. That they would henceforth look for help outside the Empire was hardly to be wondered at.

In still another respect the youthful Emperor displayed a truly ingenuous point of view. Early in 1917 the war news from all fronts boded ill for the Central Powers; food supplies were running low and the rationing of comestibles both for soldiers and civilian populations had become critical. Yet in the face of acute national need there still flourished a group of shrewd profiteers whose price-fixing maneuvers and secret hoarding turned mankind's misery into jingling coin. The Emperor was horrified. Speaking to his Cabinet at Baden-bei Wien, whither he had moved his private office and the High Command, Karl railed against these grasping ghouls.

"Your Majesty," explained Count Ottokar Czernin, "great fortunes are made by non-combatants in every war."

Karl looked aghast. "No, no," he cried, "that—that's immoral!"

A faint smile curled the lips of his listeners. They were older men, all of them, who had long ago lost their illusions. But the Emperor continued, rising to his feet:

"Gentlemen, war must not be a boom period for business, otherwise capital would have an interest in fomenting trouble, and all national wealth would go into the pockets of the profiteers—"

"And is not that the place where wealth has always gone?" sneered Czernin, who lost no opportunity to point up the Emperor's inexperience and political naïveté.

But Karl was too inflamed with the Crusader's spirit to notice the personal thrust. He continued to search his mind for a solution until at last a workable idea presented itself.

"Very well," he declared with solemn air, "let profiteers make money while their fellow men die. But when there is peace I shall issue a decree ordering all wartime profits to be confiscated by the Government."

This brought him back to the one issue which loomed uppermost in his heart, the hope of calling off the War before all Europe bled to death. He had already drawn up a memorandum for his ministers to study prior to its being sent to the chancelleries of all the major powers. It contained a reasonable appeal, filled with face-saving suggestions whereby each country could make peace without too great a loss of pride. Naturally he was counting on the ready co-operation of all combatants alike, since he assumed that three years of fighting had brought the world to its senses. But these calculations were wrong. The Entente, far outnumbering the Central Powers, had no need to meet Karl's overtures on equal terms. The Viennese invitation to a peace parley would have called forth jeers in St. Petersburg, Rome, London and Paris. Aware of this, Czernin and the Cabinet vetoed the King's proposal.

Karl was dismayed. He had realized the odds against him but his faith in human nature had outweighed all doubts. Now this same faith prompted a second measure, namely the launching of peace overtures by the Central Powers alone. To be sure, for this purpose he required the consent of his own allies, Germany, Bulgaria and Turkey, whose authorized spokesman he hoped to be.

But circumstances combined once more against him. Just as he prepared to call the Cabinet into a special session, two visitors arrived from Berlin. They were Dr. Alfred Zimmermann, German Secretary of State, and Admiral von Holtzendorff, Chief of the German Naval Staff. Both gentlemen reached Vienna on the morning of January 20, 1917, in order to discuss the practicability of unlimited submarine warfare.

The Austrian Council of Ministers, together with the Emperor, Admiral von Haus and General Conrad von Hötzendorf, gathered at the Ballplatz for a conference that lasted far into the night. A problem of grave import held the attention of everyone present—the British blockade of the Central Powers.

"Germany," declared Zimmermann, "will be exhausted in three months if this systematic throttling of food supplies and raw materials is allowed to continue."

Karl nodded. Austria, too, was feeling the pinch. Vienna had been without butter, sugar and milk since Michaelmas, and there were now four meatless days a week instead of two. Assuredly proud Albion, a nation of shopkeepers, had hit upon the most efficacious of war measures in simply cutting off the enemy's groceries.

"Our army is underfed," continued Zimmermann, "and our people at home are starving."

And now, having prepared the ground, the German Secretary

of State made room for his colleague, Admiral von Holtzendorff, to drop a verbal bomb.

"We are beaten," said the Naval Chief, "unless we avail ourselves of one remaining arm—the submarine. Drastic application of this weapon will curtail enemy food and armament supplies so swiftly that capitulation must follow."

In other words, the submarine could not only break the blockade but it would bring the Entente Powers to heel, forcing them to sue for peace before Germany herself broke down. Was Austria agreeable to such a course of action? Or rather, since the Kaiser's U-boats would prove ineffectual in the North Sea and the Atlantic unless the Mediterranean were simultaneously policed, could Austria turn over to Germany the use of her Adriatic ports of Trieste, Pola and Cattaro?

It was a knotty question and one which Karl had long ago steeled himself to answer. On purely humanitarian grounds he opposed the submarine; its occasional exploits had disclosed a harrowing form of death surpassed only by the slow agony of poison gas. But the *unlimited* application of submarine warfare involved less sentimental and more practical considerations, since it entailed the certain alienation of neutral governments whose merchant vessels might become the target of underwater guns. No, the Emperor Karl would not consent.

"Thank you," he said sharply, "we have enough enemies already."

Zimmermann jumped to his feet. "All is lost, Your Majesty, unless we choose this last resort!"

"Our losses will be greater if we do not disdain it."

It was Admiral von Holtzendorff who now arose to twirl a fierce mustache. "And has Your Majesty," he queried, "a valid reason for thus quitting a bargain?"

"I made no bargain," Karl retorted with a flush. "This war and all its misery are not of my doing—the present was bequeathed to me by a past in which I had no hand. Still, I shall not consent to the indiscriminate drowning of helpless civilians!"

"Civilians can keep out of danger zones," warned the Admiral, "whereas our population at home cannot escape the British blockade. England teaches the world how to treat innocent non-combatants; she feels no qualm about starving our women and children—"

Karl interrupted him. "It is late," he said; "I think we had better adjourn until tomorrow."

With this the Emperor retired.

The debate, however, continued for another hour between the members of the German and the Austrian High Command. While their awed Viennese listeners cocked anxious ears both Zimmermann and Holtzendorff quoted a few statistics, counting up a fleet of one hundred and twenty U-boats ready for action. In addition they reported that production schedules were speeding up until the total number had been doubled, thereby guaranteeing victory to the Central Powers in less than four months. Holtzendorff was as sure of this as he was of *Die Wacht am Rhein*. On the Danube no such certainty prevailed.

At noon the following day the Empress entertained the visitors at luncheon. Regardless of Zita's effort to create innocuous small talk, the conversation veered quickly to military matters. Once, as she dwelt with fervor on the unseasonable weather, Holtzendorff challenged her:

"I am aware that Your Majesty has changed the subject twice. Is it because Your Majesty opposes submarines—or war itself?"

Zita's soft eyes widened. "I hate war, like every woman who would rather see people happy than dead or maimed."

"Men fight and die willingly for a cause!"

"Perhaps," the Empress admitted, "but all the suffering—it seems so senseless."

Holtzendorff snorted. "Suffering! What does that matter?" He slapped his portly side until his belly rocked. "Myself, I work hardest on an empty stomach. When times are bad I just tighten my belt and make the best of things."

It was Zita who snorted back. "That should be easy enough, since admirals always manage to sit at well-spread tables!"

A dreadful silence fell, after which Admiral von Holtzendorff rose and cleared his throat. In clipped Prussian tones he begged to be excused.

Later that day, as the Cabinet meeting was resumed, the German guests wore an expression of truculent detachment. They made no further attempts to sway Austria in favor of the Kaiser's plan; in fact, they seemed to have lost interest in submarine warfare altogether. This made it easy for Karl to reiterate his final and uncompromising refusal.

"At the risk of losing the war," he declared firmly, "Austria cannot condone the indiscriminate sinking of merchant vessels at sea. We refuse to turn over our coast line as a base for U-boat operations."

With this he bowed to the Berlin officials and closed the conference. It was only now that Holtzendorff and Zimmermann came to life. Almost in unison they cried out:

"Fortunately the matter no longer depends upon Austrian consent!"

Karl turned about, his startled face growing ashen. "What do you mean?"

Holtzendorff answered. "My orders reached Berlin this noon. The U-boats have already set out."

Karl could not believe it. "You have declared submarine war on the whole world?" he gasped. "But that is preposterous—it is insane!"

The gentlemen from Berlin smiled at the puerile apprehensions of this Hapsburg who, they felt, should not have been consulted in the first place. Warfare was a Prussian business.

Consternation had meanwhile gripped Karl's entourage. General Conrad von Hötzendorf voiced the unanimous protest of his fellow officers as he exclaimed: "This is an outrage! The submarines must be recalled at once—"

The German Admiral shook his head in mock regret. "Too late," he murmured. "They cannot be reached, even by wireless."

At this Emperor Karl gripped the table until his knuckles showed a whitish cast. "That means ships—neutral ships—may already have been sunk?"

The visitors bowed and prepared to leave. "Yes," they agreed in unison, "—ships—may already have been sunk."



Photo Koller Tanár, Budapest.

Archduke Otto, wearing Hungarian court dress for the coronation of his parents.

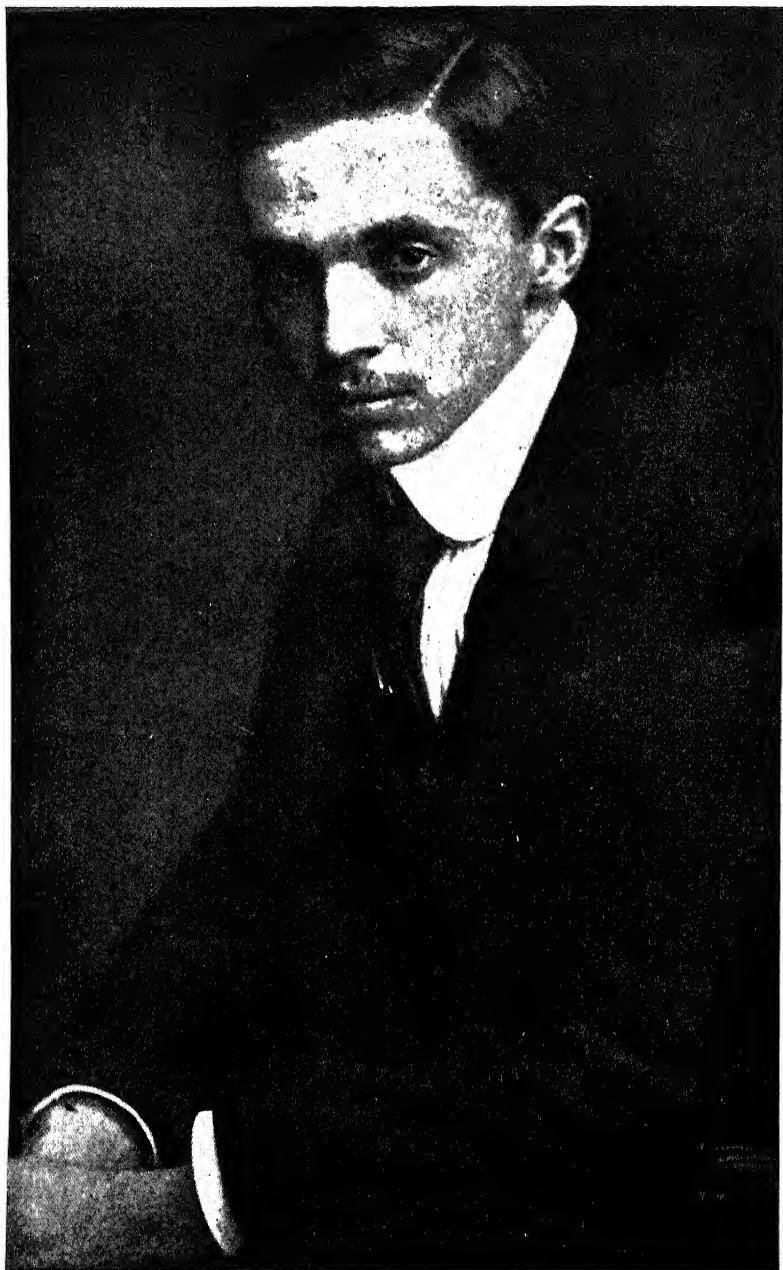


Photo Carel, Paris.

Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma.

CHAPTER 8

THE EMPEROR did not sleep that night. He sat with his wife at the bedside of Prince Robert, their third child, who had come down with influenza. Together the royal couple reviewed the day's happenings as well as the possible evils lying ahead. Decidedly the outlook was not cheerful.

Twelve hours later a telegram arrived from King Alfonso of Spain, giving warning that neutrality would be hard to keep if Spanish boats were torpedoed abroad or in home waters.

"There it is!" Karl complained to Secretary Polzer-Hoditz, "The first reproach from a nation which up to now was friendly."

He sent an immediate reply to Madrid with assurances that Alfonso, who was related to Karl and Zita through both the Hapsburg and Bourbon lines, had nothing to fear. Austria would plead with Germany for abandonment of her reckless purpose.

Meanwhile other protests poured in. King Constantine of Greece, married to the Kaiser's sister and therefore intensely pro-German, urged Karl to influence Berlin against the use of submarines in the Mediterranean. "Otherwise," wrote the Greek monarch, "I shall not be able to prevail much longer over the French and British sympathies of our Premier, Venizelos."

Lastly there echoed from overseas the increasing hostility of public opinion in the United States. A controversy over neutral trade rights had long been rampant between Washington and Berlin, with an open rift almost in sight. This would indeed

be the last straw. Again the Emperor Karl summoned his ministers for renewed parleys which might keep the War in its present boundaries without hurling a firebrand into the New World. His efforts met the rebuff of Foreign Minister Czernin, who approved the Berlin tactics and won the Vienna Cabinet to the same view. In vain Karl cried out:

"Germany always underestimates her enemies. Now she is underestimating the United States and overestimating herself. Berlin has been struck with a blindness that will plunge us all into ruin!"

The young monarch did not sway his listeners. Like Czernin, the Cabinet saw in Karl an inexperienced individual who had accidentally ascended the throne and who lacked all preparation for his job. It was their duty to do him obeisance, even honor, but not to obey. Thus the imperial plea was disregarded; Austria rendered belated approval of Germany's naval operations and the Adriatic ports were turned over to Holtzendorff for a submarine base. At Kiel Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz congratulated his colleagues with assurances that victory would now be certain and no fears need be entertained with regard to America.

"The United States must first raise an army," explained the white-haired commander while stroking his great beard. "Before this army is shipped across the seas we shall have settled matters on the Western Front."

It was a terrific gamble which a desperate German Reich was prepared to take. And the Emperor Karl, who had never made a pact with Berlin, who had not declared war on Serbia, who had inherited a horrible obligation to engage in wholesale slaughter for which he was not responsible, would be expected to share in that gamble. Well, he did not propose to do so. Despite the blatant optimism surging through the Central

Powers, Karl saw nothing but trouble ahead. He stood alone taking this pessimistic view, yet time would prove his estimate correct.

Since he foresaw defeat it was natural that he must weigh what this meant for Austria-Hungary. A victorious Entente could not be expected to handle the vanquished foe with silken gloves; the Central Powers would suffer a vindictive peace in punishment for their abysmal failure against a world of enemies. Whatever this punishment might entail, Germany, with her homogeneous population, would face the future in resignation born of national unity. But the Hapsburg Empire was a hodge-podge of mixed races, each of which would flee from the sinking ship at the first sign of alarm. The Danube Basin would be broken up from a single federal and economic unit into a medley of squabbling minorities, each clamoring for sovereignty.

Obviously Austria-Hungary had more to lose as a result of Germany's self-willed tactics than the Reich itself. Therefore, if Berlin chose to act independently and in opposition to Hapsburg wishes, Vienna could do the same. For the second time the Emperor Karl resolved upon a definite step toward peace. The promise made on his accession had been without form or pattern, a mere uttered hope that he might sway the belligerent powers toward a joint proposal for an armistice. This task, too great in scope, must now be whittled down to practical dimensions. Unable to speak for the Entente nations, Karl hoped to become a self-appointed spokesman for the Central Powers. His conduct remained ethical to a fault; his purpose was not a betrayal of his allies (Germany, Bulgaria and Turkey) by suing for *separate peace*, but a *separate suing* for peace which would benefit them all.

Some years ago (how long it seemed through the dark clouds

of war!) when he was courting Zita, Karl had established friendly bonds with her family at Pianore. Two of Zita's brothers, Prince Sixtus and Prince Xavier, were serving now with the Entente forces in Belgium. It was Sixtus, a captain of artillery, whom the Emperor remembered as a particularly idealistic and intelligent youth. A go-between who could bear confidential messages from Austria to the enemy camp was needed. Why not the Empress's brother?

Zita concurred in this opinion and offered aid in making contact. She wrote to her mother, urging that Sixtus lend himself to the task of opening negotiations with Foreign Minister Jules Cambon in Paris. At the same time Frau Berta Szeps-Zuckerkan dl (daughter of Moritz Szeps, one-time editor of the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* and friend of the late Archduke Rudolf) was entrusted with a similar message to her sister Sofie, who had married a brother of Georges Clemenceau. Lest Austria's position be misunderstood and interpreted as treachery toward the Central Powers, the following premise was laid down in the Emperor's handwriting:

"The alliance between Austria-Hungary, Germany, Bulgaria and Turkey remains indissoluble. A separate peace with one of these states, as apart from the others, is not under consideration."

The Duchess Antonia of Bourbon-Parma hastened to Belgium with her daughter's note. At La Panne she confided in her friends, King Albert and Queen Elizabeth, who promptly lent their support to the cause by granting Prince Sixtus and his brother an extended leave of absence. The two young men left for Paris, where they obtained an interview with Cambon and Prime Minister Aristide Briand, prior to their appearance before President Raymond Poincaré.

It was at this time, on February 13, 1917, that the German Kaiser arrived on a sudden visit in Vienna. Without indulging in preliminaries, Wilhelm II announced that diplomatic relations with the United States had lately reached such a degree of tension that Germany was ready to drop all pretense; he proposed that Austria fall in line with the Reich in making a clean break with the authorities in Washington. This the Emperor Karl refused flatly to do. Instead, he turned the conversation to more urgent matters at home, pointing out that Austria-Hungary's military power was failing, raw materials for the manufacture of munitions were exhausted, new recruits could not be found, and a sullen despair due to hunger was beginning to show itself among civilian populations throughout the realm. Were there any symptoms of this sort in Germany?

"Absolutely not," retorted the Kaiser, "the Reich is holding up magnificently."

Karl reached out a tentative feeler. "Our enemies too are showing the strain," he ventured. "I think there is a good chance for discussing peace."

But Wilhelm shook his head. "Impossible," he cried vehemently, "we shall consider nothing but a victory-peace!"

With this he departed, satisfied that Hapsburg fingers had been properly rapped, yet irked withal at realization that the purpose of his journey had come to naught.

Karl, meanwhile, went on unperturbed about his private business, certain that good will on the part of the Entente would in the end bring Germany to terms. And he had reason to believe in a favorable *rapprochement* after the first reports came in from France. Sixtus had met with surprising co-operation. The outbreak of revolution in Russia, as well as continued doubt concerning America's participation in the

War, kept the Entente in a state of trepidation. Poincaré welcomed talk of peace. He quickly drew up four points which might serve as a basis for parley:

1. The return of Alsace-Lorraine to France without compensation in the form of colonies.
2. Restoration of Belgium.
3. Restoration of Serbia with Albania added to its territory.
4. Surrender of Constantinople to Russia.

These stipulations were passed on by Sixtus to the Emperor Karl's confidential emissary, Count Tamás Erdödy, who conveyed them to Vienna. The next problem would be to win the approval of the Cabinet. Karl took up the matter with his Ministers, who gave their lukewarm assent provided Germany did not disagree; Tisza, Clam and von Burian felt sure that a veto from Berlin would presently cause the whole issue to be dropped. Meanwhile, with Czernin's half-hearted aid, the Emperor worked out a memorandum along the lines proposed by Poincaré. The text ran as follows:

"L'Offre de Paix de l'Autriche."
("Austria's Peace Offer.")

- "1. Austria-Hungary, believing that France has a just claim to Alsace-Lorraine (or to that part which formerly was French), will use all possible influence to effect the return of this territory to France.
- "2. Belgium shall be restored to sovereign power under its current dynasty, together with all colonial possessions in Africa and compensation for damages suffered.
- "3. Austria-Hungary never wished the destruction of Serbia. This country must be restored to full sovereignty under the current royal house. As further proof of good faith Austria-Hungary will turn over to Serbia the state of Albania so as to provide an outlet to the

Adriatic. This is to be followed by ample economic adjustments.

- "4. With Russia we shall negotiate, relinquishing all interest in Constantinople in return for that part of our territory now occupied by Russian troops.

"As soon as these terms are accepted, the Emperor of Austria pledges himself to maintain his troops in a passive position, provided our opponents observe the same attitude.

"In the event of the present offer being signed by France and her allies, Germany may reject all participation, compelling Austria-Hungary to abandon her efforts for peace; accordingly, a most pressing plea is made for support from the Entente, should Germany turn about and make war on Austria-Hungary."

This was the substance of the draft which Karl wished to submit to France. But he did not entrust Erdödy with the task of conveying it across the border, due to the dangerous reaction its discovery might evoke in Berlin. As yet Karl wanted no breach with Germany; he hoped with stubborn fervor that the Kaiser's attitude would change on being faced with tangible results. Thus it became imperative that negotiations continue in deepest secrecy, without possibility of information leaking out before anything had been accomplished.

The only way this secrecy could be insured was by dealing with Sixtus directly; in short, the Prince must come incognito to Austria. In an impassioned plea the Empress Zita prevailed upon her brother to brave every hardship for the sake of all that was at stake. Her words carried a stark eloquence:

"Ne te laisse pas arrêter par des considérations qui, dans la vie courante, seraient justifiées. Pense à tous ces mal-

heureux qui vivent dans l'enfer des tranchées, qui y meurent par centaines tous les jours, et viens . . ."

("Do not let yourself be held back by considerations which in ordinary life might be justified. Think of those wretches, living in the hell of the trenches or dying daily by the hundreds, and do come. . .")

Sixtus came, and with him his brother Xavier. Together the two young men set out for Geneva, where Erdödy would join them as escort through Liechtenstein to Feldkirch and across the Austrian line. The Princes carried passports with assumed names, as well as instructions in code to safeguard them against border difficulties. Their goal was Castle Laxenburg, outside Vienna, where Karl had hastily moved his court.

On the evening of March 23 Europe was blanketed in snow. A storm raged over the highways as the travelers drove under cover of darkness to the castle gate. A guard stepped from the sentry box.

"Who's there?"

Erdödy gave a pre-arranged salute, scarcely visible through the blast of snow.

"Password!" demanded the watchman.

"*Friede.*" ("Peace.")

Only now did the gates open and the visitors gain admittance into an inner court. They continued on to a small anteroom where an attendant took charge of their wraps. Then, while Erdödy remained behind, the Princes were ushered into the imperial study. A moment later Karl and Zita appeared.

With Latin effusion the Princes embraced their brother-in-law and the sister they had not seen since 1914. They well knew that for Zita those years had been an agonizing experience, chained as she was to a country that made war on her own kin. Some-

times she had felt like one dead, who could look back across the dividing gulf at all the loved ones who remained together on the other shore—together, while she alone moved in an alien world. But no, Zita could not really think that! She had Karl and the children; she had everything there was to live for . . . And now, a fit of trembling seemed to overcome her at the realization, now she had even her brothers—here before her very eyes! With a little outcry of joy she clung to them each in turn, while Karl smiled at her mild hysteria.

The balance of that evening was spent in talk. A jumble of war news, family gossip, even comment on the extraordinary weather, all served as a welcome outlet for nerves that had known too much tension. From the cold kitchens a sleepy servant brought two pots of "*Ersatz*" coffee which were drained in hearty gulps. Next, the small company tiptoed down the hall to a large nursery where the enemy uncles observed the children in their sleep. Only when every homely topic had been exhausted did the world and its tragedy claim the stage. From then on the conversation centered about a single subject: peace.

Out of a leather portfolio the Emperor drew forth his memorandum and handed it to Sixtus. The Prince scrutinized every word before making several notations on the margin.

"A few points must be worked out in greater detail," he remarked gravely. "I shall need your sanction for any change or paraphrase which may become necessary in my dealings with the French."

Karl looked puzzled. He felt a trifle taken aback at the Prince's suggestion that the memorandum might call for revision. But Sixtus was quick to explain.

"There is a shifting government in Paris; deputies and ministers are forever alternating. We cannot tell whether the terms that suit Cambon or even Briand will also suit their successors."

The Emperor understood and nodded his agreement. Sixtus must be free to extemporize if the occasion demanded it.

"But remember," he warned, "we have still to win Germany's approval. You must not promise France too much."

A few more questions of policy were discussed before the conference came to an end and, silently as they had arrived, the visitors departed. Hatless, Karl accompanied them to the gate, unmindful of the snow that poured in thick flakes from the sky. Prince Sixtus voiced a final admonition:

"Don't count on anything. Poincaré will not commit himself to a definite stand until he is certain of England and Russia."

Karl agreed. "Even after that," he mused, for there was vacillation in his heart, "we have yet to hear from the Kaiser—"

They shook hands and the brothers stepped into the waiting car. The chauffeur, who had stood at rigid attention, started the motor. Again Sixtus turned back.

"Write me a letter that I can show Aristide Briand," he whispered; "it is never wrong to win a Prime Minister."

The Emperor understood. Sixtus wished to leave no avenue untried in his efforts to reach a compromise with France.

Since the Princes dared not travel by daylight for fear of being recognized, they headed now for Vienna, where Count Erdödy would give them shelter for the night. The following day they must remain in hiding until evening before setting out for France.

"You shall have the letter," His Majesty promised, "by courier before sunset tomorrow."

Again the three men shook hands. There was a screech of brakes and a crunching of snow as the car rolled through the gates. With eyes glazed by a visionary's dream Karl saw the tracks disappear in a blanket of white.

CHAPTER 9

THE EMPEROR returned indoors and sat down at his desk. In his round smooth script he penned the original, twice to be revised, "Sixtus Letter" of post-war fame. It was dated March 24, 1917, and ran as follows:

"My dear Sixtus,

"The third year of this war, which has brought so much misery to the world, nears its end. Today, more than ever, all the peoples of my Empire are ready to bring even greater sacrifices to preserve our integrity. It is thanks to their unity that the Monarchy has been able to endure these last three years. The courage of my soldiers, especially on the Balkan Front, can hardly be denied. But France has likewise displayed great vigor and magnificent *élan*. We admire the traditional valor of her army and the immense sacrifice made by the entire French nation. Thus, though we are for the moment enemies, we do not differ in aspirations and ideals, and I trust that the keen sympathy I hold for France—shared by the peoples of my realm—may serve as a pledge against any recurrence of this war, for which I cannot in any way be held responsible.

"Because of this, and in proof of my sincerity, I beg you to inform Monsieur Poincaré, President of the French Republic, (unofficially and in strictest confidence), that I will support the just claims of France for restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, using every possible influence with my ally.

"In regard to Belgium, it is my opinion that her sovereignty must be restored, together with all her African possessions over and above compensations for damage suffered. Similarly we intend to restore the sovereignty of Serbia and, as further sign of good faith, to provide her

with an Adriatic port as well as generous economic concessions. For ourselves we demand that Serbia disband all political societies, particularly the *Narodna Odbrana*, which work toward the destruction of Austria-Hungary. With a guaranty from the Entente Serbia must pledge herself to check all agitation, both inside her frontiers and beyond them.

"Recent developments in Russia compel me to reserve further proposals until a legitimate and permanent government has been formed in that country.

"After having outlined these ideas, I am requesting that you confer with France and England before we open the path for official negotiations.

"It is my earnest hope that we may put an end to the misery and grief suffered by so many millions, individuals and families, in both camps. I beg you to believe in my heartfelt and brotherly affection.

"KARL."

The storm still moaned against the windowpanes as the Emperor finished. Zita lay back, half-slumbering, in a chair; she waited for the moment when Karl turned to her and in slow measured tones read aloud what he had written. She would pucker her brow, weighing each word and phrase, so as to offer a prudent opinion. But in the end her woman's heart would be incapable of an impartial judgment, since in her eyes the Emperor-King could do no wrong. The trouble was that other people did not feel the same, particularly those Germans, or they would all acclaim Karl as a Messiah who was trying to save the world from itself! She was exasperated at the thought that men could be so blind. . . .

As for the splendid letter, Zita would not permit a courier to handle it. Her brothers returned the following night in person and bore the precious document away. Her parting admonition to Sixtus was almost a command:

"Remember, peace absolutely must be concluded. *We must have peace at any price!*"

With this exhortation ringing in their ears the Parma Princes sped to Paris where they arrived on March 31. Quite as Sixtus had feared, France had meanwhile undergone a change of Cabinet: Briand was out of favor and Alexandre Ribot held office as the new Prime Minister. Not without misgiving did the two intermediaries from Vienna present the imperial letter to this stranger, who lacked adequate knowledge of what had gone before. In fact, so startled was Ribot by the proposal laid in front of him that he set sail post-haste for England, where he sought the advice of Lloyd George.

"*C'est la paix!*" ("This is peace!") exclaimed the British Premier after one glance at the Emperor's letter. "We must co-operate at once."

But Ribot did not share his enthusiasm. He was a man of deep-seated prejudices, particularly with regard to the name of Bourbon. That Prince Sixtus happened to be connected, however remotely, with this house grated upon the republican sensibilities of the Frenchman. To deal with such an intermediary was patently unpatriotic. Thus Ribot set himself from the outset against the Austrian plan, placing innumerable petty obstacles in its path. He evaded personal interviews with Sixtus and sternly opposed the latter's intention of visiting King George V. Furthermore, a loophole was discovered in the text of the Emperor's offer which gave Ribot an opportunity for added chicanery. The peace pact made no mention of Italy. What would Rome and its Foreign Minister Baron Sidney Sonnino say to this?

Prince Sixtus instantly caught up the slipping mesh that threatened to mar his artful web. Through Erdödy he sent a

coded message to Laxenburg, urging upon the Emperor a quick concession of Southern Tyrol or the Trentino to the Italians. Perhaps this blandishment would break down Ribot's resistance.

In Vienna Count Erdödy tore his few remaining hairs. Concessions to a traitor? Had Italy shown consideration toward her own allies when, in 1915, she welshed on her bargain with the Central Powers and joined the Entente? It would be difficult indeed to win His Majesty's sympathy for such a petitioner and his cause.

At Laxenburg Karl flushed on hearing Erdödy pronounce the name of Austria's former ally. The erstwhile third member of that coalition known as the Triple Alliance was seldom mentioned in official circles, for it still constituted an exceedingly sore point.

"Rome wants some offer of appeasement," Erdödy reported in a tone that bespoke his own disgust.

"But on what grounds? Italy has spent the War hiding behind the skirts of the Entente; she has not scored the slightest military success."

"I don't know on what grounds, Sire."

Karl finished his indictment of the culprit nation. "Those Italians," he snorted, "they are not even capable of giving a proper stab in the back."

After this he signed a deposition which would cede the harbor of Trieste and the Trentino to Rome, for he remembered that his wife was Italian and that, barring political issues, he was really quite fond of the neighboring country.

Erdödy pocketed the document and rose to leave. Already in the vestibule, he turned about to raise another question.

"What about England, Your Majesty?"

Karl frowned in bewilderment. "I know of no territorial claims—" he ventured.

"The British have a preference for colonies," elucidated the Count.

"But Austria is without colonies herself. How can I make colonial promises to anyone?"

"German East Africa," hinted Erdödy, "the Cameroon—"

"Impossible."

"One might persuade the Kaiser—"

Karl's voice took on a note of finality. "I shall try to sway Germany toward making amends in Europe, but it would be unjustifiable to rob her of territory outside our sphere of dispute. No, no, apart from the Dardanelles—which England already controls—there is nothing I can offer King George."

"That is your last word, Sire?"

"Yes."

Erdödy was dismissed. Although he had seemingly pressed his master toward an Anglo-Austrian *impasse*, the cautious statesman noted with pleasure that the Emperor mixed good sense with Utopian reasoning. Karl had no intention of exasperating Germany by making unfair demands. Reassured on this point, Count Erdödy gave way to renewed hope that the peace plan might succeed.

While the dispatch for Sixtus was hurried across Switzerland to France the Emperor Karl concluded that the decisive moment for a showdown with Wilhelm II was at hand. Accordingly he sent a code telegram dated March 29 to the Kaiser, announcing his prospective visit with Zita to Bad Homburg where the German Kaiserin was currently resting from her duties as head of the Red Cross. Their Austrian Majesties, it appeared, had never met Auguste Viktoria—a lapse which could be remedied hereby.

The Kaiser dismissed this polite motivation at once; he did not believe that Karl and Zita were traveling northward during

the ugly spring thaw for no better purpose than to shake hands with Auguste Viktoria. He knew his "Guste" was charming, but she was not so charming as all that. In short, the German Emperor smelled a mouse.

He questioned Field Marshal Lieutenant von Klepsch-Kloth about the matter, but the Field Marshal Lieutenant had no glimmering as to a likely reason for the Hapsburg visit. Nor could Prince Gottfried Hohenlohe make answer, though he hazarded a guess that Karl might have run out of troops.

"Those Austrians," said the Prince, "they are not cut out for war."

In any case, Wilhelm was determined to impress his younger ally by gathering together at Homburg the flower of his martial staff. Hindenburg, Mackensen, Ludendorff were summoned from their respective positions, while von Bethmann-Hollweg and Prince Konrad Hohenlohe supplied the diplomatic touch. Surrounded by this illustrious corona the Kaiser mounted the Homburg station platform on April 3 to await the Viennese guests.

The visit went off without noticeable complications as well as without noticeable results. Wilhelm II proved himself an assiduous host; he had planned breakfasts, luncheons, a sight-seeing trip to the near-by Roman ruins of Saalburg, a gala dinner followed by the customary presentation of local nobility, and—to cap it all—a personal tête-à-tête between the Austrian sovereigns and his wife. Amid compliments, picnic excursions, parades and a spell of indigestion the Emperor Karl found it exceedingly difficult to propose that Germany dismember herself in behalf of peace. On two occasions he opened the subject of Alsace-Lorraine only to find the Kaiser noncommittal and evasive. Secretary von Polzer-Hoditz, who had accompanied the Em-

peror Karl, deduced correctly that "the two monarchs did not get beyond establishing the fact that they were not of the same mind."

Meanwhile Count Czernin and the Austrian strategist Freiherr Arz von Straussenberg conferred with Bethmann-Hollweg on the same issue. Czernin did so with ill-concealed reluctance, since he belonged to the Vienna school of "sausage-making"; his policy of letting things take their course stood in direct opposition to the Emperor Karl's itch for shaping that course according to some newfangled and juvenile ideal. Frankly, as far as the whole project of world peace was concerned, Czernin harbored a somewhat cynical view, for he considered an occasional war essential to the growth of mankind. In this he subscribed to Kant's opinion: "Eternal peace? A good inscription for the door of a cemetery. . . ." With such a sponsor it was not to be wondered at that the hopes of Karl and Zita miscarried.

Even yet the Austrian Emperor did not give up hope. Between *causeries* in crowded drawing rooms and stilted public appearances which made discussion impossible, he scribbled steadfastly on menu cards, hotel stationery and bits of note paper, putting down all the things that Wilhelm ought to know and which up to this moment had remained unsaid. Without mincing words he wrote of Austria's imminent collapse, adding that Germany's internal situation—despite laudable efforts to put up a front—looked equally bad. Military circles in Berlin, he insisted, were covering up the truth by spreading false reports of victory. In fact, the whole idea of a "victory peace" must be broken down, since Germany could not go through another winter campaign without riots and revolution breaking out among her underfed civilians at home. These and a great many other sobering thoughts found expression in Karl's energetic script,

while Wilhelm dodged more direct language that might have been spoken face to face.

When the Homburg visit ended, these jottings were not yet complete, since Karl intended to add that food, wine and champagne served up for foreign royalties had failed to conceal the empty markets and the hungry faces that revealed the real Germany, a Germany not to be saved by recourse to submarine terrorism. "Machinery does not win wars," he wrote as the train plodded over the plains of Hesse. "The U-boat is vastly over-rated as a decisive weapon; without incapacitating the enemy, its use will lead Germany to ruin."

Well, he had got it all off his chest. His aide-de-camp, Count Ledochowski, must make a clean draft and return with it as soon as possible to the Kaiser's headquarters. Karl wanted to take no chances. Wilhelm had been unwilling to listen, but he might be induced to read.

It was late afternoon of April 6, 1917, when Karl and Zita arrived at Laxenburg Castle. The whole court had assembled in the drawing room to greet the weary sovereigns. There were the ladies-in-waiting: Countess Nora Nostiz, Countess Agnes Schönborn (a cousin of the Empress) and Frau von Kállay. The Chamberlain, Count Attems, and the Chief Court Chamberlain, Count Alexander Eszterházy, stood beside the Chaplain, Bishop Seydl. In addition there were the Emperor's aides, Freiherr von Catinelli, Colonel Brougier, Count Hunyadi and Commander von Schonta, besides the head of the military chancery, Adjutant General Baron von Marterer. It was Marterer who rushed to the door as Their Majesties entered. He held a telegram in his hand.

Karl took the message and opened it with trembling fingers as his eyes scanned the grave assemblage. He read the brief

text which had been transmitted only a few moments before through the Foreign Office in Vienna.

"What is it?" Zita exclaimed, distraught by his sudden change of color.

Without a word he handed her the crumpled paper. Outside in the gardens of the *Schloss* the children laughed and screamed at play. But there was silence in the drawing room where Zita's unbelieving eyes deciphered a terse bit of news.

The United States of America had declared war on Germany.

CHAPTER 10

THERE seemed to be no point now in sending Ledochowski. Even if Wilhelm II deigned to peruse the Emperor Karl's notations, it was too late for their import to be of much use.

Or was it too late?

Zita had asked the question. She was a woman, with a woman's urge to ward off danger not at the eleventh hour only but at the twelfth and beyond that until all shreds of hope were gone. She was the eternal mother, seeking or giving protection.

"Ledochowski *must* go," she said firmly. "The Emperor Wilhelm is in Kreuznach on his way to the Front. We can reach him in time."

Thus the long memorandum composed by Karl during his Homburg visit came finally into the Kaiser's hands. Its first reading called forth a storm of indignation. This was outrageous! The whole Prussian Staff must take action against that brazen Hapsburg whelp who called himself Emperor and who had the audacity to scoff at German prowess. It was high time that Austria learned to respect her betters, the citizens of the Reich.

But, on second thought, America's entry into the War had created a new situation; Germany had more need of Austria today than ever before. Thus the Prussian Staff had best be kept at bay while Wilhelm in person worked out a response to the Hapsburg memorandum. It must be a conciliatory response and one which painted Germany's internal affairs in rosy colors, so as to whip up the flagging courage of her allies. A sorry lot

they were—Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey. Cowards all. But for want of anything better they must be baited and cajoled into allegiance.

After collecting a few statistics from his generals the Kaiser sat down at his desk and wrote:

“Kreuznach,
April 14, 1917.”

“My dear Karl:

“Many thanks for the *promemoria* you sent, which I am studying and examining thoroughly. When I have consulted with my responsible advisors you will hear from me more fully. For the moment let me assure you that our submarine exploits to date have been highly successful, netting 861,000 tons of commercial shipping sunk in March (including one week of inactivity because of stormy seas). Final figures cannot be computed until the end of the month, but I expect them to be still higher. In addition we must not forget the damage done by our mines, amounting to 100,000 tons per month, which sums up to nearly one million tons for March alone. The Navy was pledged to sink only from 500,000 to 600,000 tons as a good monthly average!

“Of course the effect of all this is seriously changing life in London where, I am told, restaurants and hotels serve only reduced portions to their customers. They can’t get potatoes *für Geld und gute Worte* (for love or money). Beyond a doubt England will soon be on rations like a fortress under siege, for only yesterday one of her most important newspapers used the word ‘famine’ in bold print. . . .

“The predicament of our enemies is further aggravated by reports from the United States Secretary of Agriculture that winter crops have failed, which means destruction of 450 million bushels of wheat (225 less than the normal harvest). What can America do? . . . And I shouldn’t wonder if the situation in Canada is just as bad. You know that the Argentine has prohibited exports. Only Australia remains,

and it takes three months coming and going before the harvest can be shipped from there. Our reports state that early cargoes of Australian wheat have already been sunk by our U-Boats off Alexandria. Altogether, since January 1, 1917, 3,100,000 tons of enemy shipping have gone down.

"In Russia, time as well as the Nihilists work in our favor. Talk among prisoners and troops indicates that there will be no further offensive; the Russian army will remain purely defensive, since it can do nothing more. Naturally my Eastern Command received orders from me to save our own troops by making no further attack; the Russians are to be left in peace, particularly during Easter Week. With revolution rife in the interior, Russian troops are deserting from the Front in order to join the looting at home. Meanwhile we distribute pamphlets asking if they are ready for peace; Miliukov will have to surrender soon, or he will be sorry. His own opponents want peace, which indicates that sooner or later the matter can be settled without trouble. Anyway, Russia can't last much longer, since she too is faced with famine.

"Goodbye and *Auf Wiedersehen*. The Empress sends you a thousand greetings.

"Your loyal friend,

"WILHELM."

It was with profound disappointment that Karl and Zita read the above document. Its sanguine tabulation of German successes and hopes revealed more poignantly than an outright refusal that Berlin was not ready to parley with anyone except on terms which made Germany the victor.

"Very well," the Emperor decided, as his lips tightened in a grim line, "the picture has changed. I shall work singlehanded from now on and seek a *separate peace*." Henceforth he thought in terms of Austria-Hungary alone.

Was this unfair to Turkey or Bulgaria, the two minor allies

who fought on Austria's side? Hardly, since Germany had from the start assumed command over the Central Powers with regard to all matters of policy. Neither at Constantinople nor in Sofia would Karl have met with co-operation against Berlin. Thus he made up his mind to act alone.

But in France a different wind had begun to blow. Assured of America's support, with United States troops presently rushing across the Atlantic, the Entente no longer viewed the future with alarm. The healthy, well-fed Yankee recruits who soon would bolster France's tired *poilus* and England's nerve-shattered Tommies augured a triumphant climax for the Allied cause. Why bargain now for peace on even terms when one side felt sure of winning? With victory in the bag, the Entente could pick the prizes.

In Paris Karl's further efforts met with cool rebuff. For a time Ribot temporized, since he must be quite certain that the Americans would not arrive too late. Together with Sonnino he quibbled over technicalities concerning the Italian settlement. Prince Sixtus made another trip to Vienna and obtained from Karl a second official letter to the Government of France, in which new sacrifices were promised in the ceding of still further territory. It was in vain. To wash his hands of the whole enterprise, Ribot eventually cast suspicion on the interview between the Austrian and German Emperors at Homburg. How was France to know, he queried, whether subversive maneuvers were not afoot? On the other hand, if Austria—without Germany—asked for separate peace, *who* would give Alsace-Lorraine to France? The Emperor Karl could make no promises regarding provinces he did not own. The whole situation, Monsieur Ribot pointed out, had become ridiculous.

Matters were not helped by that center of quick-change artists,

the French Cabinet. During late summer Ribot was succeeded by Paul Painlevé, who was Prime Minister for a month before giving way in November to Georges Clemenceau, the "Tiger." Under the latter's chauvinist régime all contact with Vienna was broken off and the veil of secrecy which cloaked the peace negotiations tore asunder. The "Sixtus letters" became public.

An international scandal broke loose over the heads of Karl and Zita. Although the German Government had not been kept in the dark, but had been thrice invited to take part in mediation, a storm of obloquy now issued from Berlin. Austria was loudly denounced as a traitor nation, her Emperor jeered as a champion of duplicity.

"I never knew," protested Karl, "that a betrayer will warn the victim of his intention to betray!"

But his earnest avowals fell on deaf ears. There was treason within his own ranks, for none of the old-time "sausage-makers" in the Austrian Ministry wished to share in the Emperor's blame. Czernin led all others in turning against the monarch and shirking responsibility for any of his actions. On being challenged by von Bethmann-Hollweg, Czernin flatly denied the existence of the compromising imperial letters, with the added implication that if they did exist he, Czernin, had not seen them. Thus overnight the Austrian Emperor had fallen from respectability into a pit of disgrace.

Only a few eloquent voices were raised in his defense, chiefly in Allied countries. Anatole France heckled Parisian listeners with fierce invective:

"Ribot est une vieille canaille d'avoir négligé une pareille occasion. Un roi de France, oui, un roi aurait pitié de notre pauvre peuple exsangüé, exténué, n'en pouvant plus. Mais la démocratie est sans coeur et sans entrailles. Au service des puissances d'argent, elle est impitoyable et inhumaine."

("Ribot is an old scoundrel for having neglected a chance like this. A king of France, yes, a king would have taken pity on our exhausted, blood-drained people, who can go no further. But democracy is without heart and without guts. In the service of moneyed powers, she is pitiless and inhuman.")

These words were uttered boldly by an artist and a philosopher who felt ashamed of his own country no less than he felt ashamed of all mankind. Neither Karl nor Zita knew of his gallant pen which etched their vindication in scathing language. Two sentences alone sufficed to proclaim Anatole France's faith in Austria's probity:

"L'Empereur Charles a offert la paix; c'est le seul honnête homme qui ait paru au cours de cette guerre—on ne l'a pas écouté. . . .

L'Empereur Charles veut sincèrement la paix, aussi tout le monde le déteste. . . ."

("The Emperor Karl has offered to make peace; here is the first decent man who has appeared in the course of this war—he was not listened to. . . .

The Emperor Karl wants peace in all sincerity, therefore the whole world detests him. . . .")

Quite apart from this opinion uttered by a contemporary, Karl stood exonerated by recorded history. A Prussian, Prince von Bismarck-Schönhausen, had long upheld the elasticity of alliances, maintaining that it would constitute a crime against humanity if a whole nation were sacrificed to save the honor of an individual. In his own memoirs Germany's Iron Chancellor set down a cool analysis:

"Treaties remain binding only within certain limits and after they prove their fitness for survival under stress. No nation should sacrifice its life out of loyalty to a contract

that leaves no other choice, for the *ultra posse nemo obligatur* cannot be ignored. The instinct of self-preservation is a sacred instinct. Countries are expected to keep alliances only as long as they can afford to do so, since history often produces unexpected circumstances against which no written guaranties can prevail. Thus the sovereign who would crucify his people on the altar of useless personal loyalty commits an unpardonable wrong."

So reasoned a German statesman long before Emperor Karl of Austria offended his Prussian allies by raising a lone voice to stop the European holocaust. But in the Germany of 1918 there was no mind of Bismarck's caliber.

CHAPTER 11

WHILE the secret peace negotiations between Vienna and Paris had broken down during the summer of 1917, the full story did not become generally known until spring of the following year. This period of grace left the Emperor Karl in an awkward position; he had been on the verge of breaking with his own ally and calling off Austria's quarrel with the Entente, only to find himself repulsed in his objective and forced to remain at war. He had won neither peace nor truce, but must go on fighting. Naturally, if fight he must, it would be on Germany's side against a super-enemy whose menace had been doubled through American money, munitions and man power. With open eyes he saw himself compelled to throw Austria's last resources into this losing contest.

Even yet, Germany did not share his sense of doom. The Berlin news agencies reported victory on victory in order to sustain and feed, not stomachs, but national optimism. While the press crowed its shrill message of cheer, baffled German burghers obeyed the slogan "*Gold gab' ich für Eisen*" ("gold I gave for iron") and turned in their watch chains, brooches, wedding rings as well as coins and copper kettles to help the Fatherland subdue its foes.

It was this power of the press that sickened Karl. Added to the editorial vice of inflating small incidents to headline proportions was the venality of publishers who turned their papers into instruments of propaganda.

"I am trying to stop the press," complained the Emperor Karl

to his Ministers, "from trumpeting forever about victory. Our people can't understand why, if everything is so splendid at the Front, they keep on getting poorer and hungrier at home."

"It destroys public morale," warned Czernin, "to print the truth when a government is in desperate straits."

Karl waved his hand impatiently. "I don't mean to shout from the house tops that we are beaten. But it is a crime to arouse false hopes in our people instead of preparing them for a peace of surrender."

"Surrender?"

"The Kaiser's victory-peace is out of the question and the equitable amnesty I proposed has failed. The only peace we now shall know is that which our enemies dictate. Yes, a peace of surrender—"

"I see," was Czernin's acid rejoinder, "that Your Majesty has given up all thought of success."

The Emperor nodded. "The war is lost. We were bound to lose it when America came in." With this he cut short the discussion.

It was a thorny road that henceforth lay ahead for Karl and Zita. Stigmatized as royal renegades whose perfidy aroused the utmost contempt, they found themselves in an impossible position. The Central Powers had cast them out; all communication between Vienna and the capitals of her allies—Sofia, Constantinople, Berlin—had suddenly ceased.

"This is absurd," the Emperor stormed. "What I attempted was for their benefit as much as for our own!"

Anger shook him as he resolved upon a drastic step: regardless of the hostile reception that was sure to await him, he would visit Austria's allies and face their opprobrium. Perhaps they would believe him once his motives were explained.

Zita approved this decision but she refused to let Karl go alone. The Balkans, in particular, were a witches' cauldron where human life was held cheap; Franz Ferdinand's last visit to Sarajevo remained a vivid memory to Hapsburg minds. Accordingly the Empress joined her husband on his round of expiatory calls, prepared to share its dangers with him.

Bulgaria, ruled by the Viennese-born Tsar Ferdinand of Coburg, was the first stop. Wearing her most radiant smile, Zita bowed to the long-nosed Ferdinand, who touched her finger-tips in frigid greeting. Not so Crown Prince Boris. Youthful and liberal in his views, Ferdinand's heir welcomed the visitors with genuine enthusiasm. As a result of this the Emperor had no difficulty in re-establishing a *rapprochement* between the estranged governments of both states. At the hour of parting Boris expressed deep regrets that the Sixtus peace mission had miscarried.

"The Kaiser will never forgive us," Zita complained.

Boris gazed at her loveliness and sighed before making answer. "No," he said sadly, "like Papa, the Kaiser sees the world only through German eyes."

From Sofia the imperial couple hastened southward to the Golden Horn. Slowly the Balkan horizon changed as Oriental minarets pierced the sky and veiled figures shuffling through crowded bazaars betokened the Moslem scene. From dusty train windows Karl and Zita peered like children at the kaleidoscopic contrast of sun-baked desert and teeming town, their eyes drinking in a welter of Scheherazade detail. As Constantinople drew near, the Sultan's Janissaries with their fierce scimitars and giant turbans lined up along the railroad tracks. At sight of their bulbous headgear Zita thought she had come upon the legendary inhabitants of Mars. With gingerly steps the visitors threaded

their way through this honor guard to the waiting carriage of Enver Pasha, Leader of the Young Turks, Minister of War and Chief of the Sultan's General Staff.

To Karl's surprise, Enver Pasha spoke fluent German (he had served as military attaché for the *Sublime Porte* in Berlin). Tall, slender, with bronzed skin and finely chiseled features, the thirty-five-year-old Turk was reputedly one of the handsomest men in Europe. Blushingly Zita admitted never having seen his like. Four years later when this gallant Adonis became enmeshed in a White Russian plot (which cost him his life in combat with Soviet soldiers at Bokhara) Zita would mourn, like countless unknown women, not the brave warrior's death but the passing of such immortal beauty.

At the moment Enver Pasha drove the Austrian guests past the great mosque of Hagia Sofia, the Vatican of Istanbul, to the Ottoman palace of Sultan Mehmed (Mohammed) V. This tiny bow-legged sovereign, whose eyes blinked sheepishly the while his thick lips drooled like those of a helpless infant, offered a striking contrast to the younger man. Two servants propelled Mehmed about, for the current master of the *Sublime Porte* was a babbling imbecile. His story, steeped in Oriental lechery and evil, challenged the pen of fiction.

Long ago the Emperor Karl had heard rumors concerning this Sultan who, as Reshid Effendi, had lived quietly at the court of his ruling brother, Abdul Hamid II. Enver Pasha now filled out the narrative in swift strokes.

Unpopular because of his cruelty, Abdul Hamid had felt himself surrounded by enemies who plotted his doom. His particular loathing was directed against the harmless Reshid in whom Abdul saw his logical successor. Since no wrong could be pinned on the boy it became necessary to destroy him by some

secret and insidious means. Well versed in bestial practices, Abdul soon hit upon the perfect solution. He locked up his brother in the royal harem where, for nine long years, the lad enjoyed himself with the only occupation possible in such a setting. When Reshid emerged at last from this orgiastic captivity he was quite witless.

"A prison cell with bread and water," finished Enver Pasha, "would have done less harm."

Quite naturally Karl had nothing to fear from the infantile wretch who sat today on Turkey's throne. As in Bulgaria, where Crown Prince Boris had been their eager host, the Austrian sovereigns rejoiced in the quick friendship and understanding of the Young Turk Leader. Their visit ended with a motion-picture performance in the Sultan's private theater where, chewing watermelon seeds and clapping gayly with his hands, Mehmed V, thoroughly fed up on women, now spent his idle hours.

From Constantinople the Emperor and Empress at last turned northward, summoning their courage for the dreaded journey to Berlin. Would Germany receive them with even a show of common courtesy? "The Prussian pants fit tightly," was an old saying, denoting that in Berlin nothing was ever done the easy way. Most likely Karl and Zita would find the going hard.

They set out bravely, with a desperate bravado. Come what may, they must do penance for their sins. But as they reached Vienna their high courage subsided and there was no need for continuing the trip further, for the Central Powers had entered upon the most climactic crisis of the war, which served as prelude to their Waterloo at hand.

That winter of 1917 became a nightmare of horrors. With courage flaming at its peak the German armies had summoned

every ounce of strength before the final collapse. They braved the combined onslaught of French, British, Belgian, Italian and American troops with a masterful heroism born of despair. Into this bloody period fell some of their greatest victories, bringing the Krupp guns within range of Paris, and causing Britain's Field Marshal Douglas Haig to speak of the Entente as standing "with our backs to the wall." These triumphs were the misleading prologue to a ghastly finale as with summer of the new year the tide changed. The dissolution of the Central Powers was punctuated by a calendar of battles: Compiègne, Belleau Wood, Soissons, Château-Thierry, Amiens, St. Mihiel, Marne, Le Cateau, Meuse-Argonne. Now the "*Furor Teutonicus*" was broken and behind the lines civilian Germans learned the dreadful truth that "*Gott*" was not "*mit uns.*" Whether in rage at having been duped to sacrifice half a million more men in needless slaughter, or through exacerbation brought on by famine and despair, the Reich's stolid citizenry broke out in revolt. Sailors mutinied at Kiel where the fleet lay in a deadlock, while angry mobs rioted in every major city. Impotence in the face of the British blockade finally crushed even the army's spirit, Germany's last bulwark against disaster; having abandoned all expectation of victory, deserters flocked back in lawless hordes, panic at their heels. It was indeed the end.

Late in October Ludendorff resigned and Berlin was ready to capitulate. A cabled appeal to President Woodrow Wilson opened the way for a truce which became effective at eleven o'clock on the morning of November 11, 1918.

Less than a fortnight after these events Wilhelm and Karl had abdicated the thrones of their ancestors. They did so at the uncompromising demands of the Entente, whose purpose it was to overthrow all enemy governments before negotiating for



Photo Underwood & Underwood, New York.

During the War, at Castle Laxenburg near Vienna: Empress Zita (in black) and her four older children with their governess, Countess Schönborn.



Photo Karinger, Budapest.

Emperor Karl visiting Sultan Mehmed V and Enver Pasha in Constantinople.

peace. Only thus could the war guilt be placed specifically on the heads of the leaders of the Central Powers.

Quailing before the Allied wrath and unwilling to face his martinets at home, the German Emperor was undecided where to go. But the increasing clamor abroad for his head put an end to vacillation. Kaiser Wilhelm, the embodiment of Prussianism, balked at the prospect of a court-martial; he fled, a refugee, into the Netherlands and out of history. Thenceforth, while tending roses or chopping wood in the gardens of Haus Doorn, the erstwhile autocrat found leisure to reflect on the words of a Hapsburg visionary who might have saved the Hohenzollern crown.

Elsewhere in Europe royalty was toppling from its traditional eminence. Tsar Ferdinand I of Bulgaria obeyed the enemy summons and retired before the threat of Serb occupation, while months ago Nicholas II of Russia, together with his family and nearest attendants, had been taken prisoner by Bolshevik troopers thirsting for Romanoff blood. The tragic dynasty was to be blotted out a short time hence during a gruesome night of murder at Ekaterinburg.

Minor thrones vanished simultaneously. In Saxony King Friedrich August abdicated with a flourish.

"Macht Euern Dreck alleene!" said the burly monarch departing for his mountain lodge in Switzerland. ("Make your own mess alone!")

"The War destroyed four petrified political structures," wrote Professor Oszkar Jászi of the University of Budapest, pointing to the eclipse of such dynasties of the first magnitude as Romanoffs, Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs and the Sultans from the Golden Horn. But in each case, except that of Austria-Hungary, the country ruled by one of these dynasties remained relatively in-

tact. Only the Hapsburg realm vanished with the downfall of its imperial house, for the ancient Danube Federation was cut up at Versailles peace tables to serve as much needed booty for those lesser members of the Entente who, unlike England and France, would not have first choice in the distribution of the spoils. Out of the feverish partition there were to emerge an enlarged Rumania, a glorified Serbia to be known as Yugoslavia, an Italian Tyrol, the puzzling hodgepodge of Czechoslovakia, a new Poland, as well as a fresh crop of racial hatreds and resentments for the germination of a still more murderous future war.

On November 11, 1918 (after four years, three months and fourteen days of fighting) a general armistice had been proclaimed. The world laid down the guns and counted up the roster of its dead: seven and a half million men slain in action, plus an added two million civilians dead of starvation or disease in enemy internment camps. In addition, since human flesh alone did not begin to pay the high price of disaster, the direct war expenses of all belligerent nations amounted to \$186,000,000,000. For this astronomical sum the vanquished Central Powers must be made responsible; David Lloyd George, turned suddenly into a rapacious avenger, uttered the words "shilling for shilling and ton for ton, let Germans pay. . . ."

In accordance with this principle the Allied plenipotentiaries met in Paris on January 12, 1919, to discuss peace terms and to distribute among themselves territories and colonial possessions of the defeated nations. The plans for such distribution had been agreed upon as early as 1915, when it had been believed that the Central Powers, vastly outnumbered by their foes, could be beaten within a single winter.

Five separate treaties were evolved, though in popular par-

lance the first of these (signed by Germany at the palace of Versailles on June 28, 1919—exactly five years to a day after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo) lent its name to the collective negotiations. Erroneously all Europe's ills since the Armistice have been lumped under one category as "consequences of the Versailles settlement," when actually the supplementary treaties played an equal part in changing the map of the world. Specifically the Austrian section was drawn up at St. Germain in September, while Bulgaria's fate was sealed at Neuilly in November of 1919. The partition of Hungary followed in June, 1920, at the Trianon (a mansion close to Versailles), and Turkey was dealt with at Sèvres in August of the same year.

The program of plunder which now ensued was in direct contradiction to Woodrow Wilson's eloquent Fourteen Points which formed the basis of the armistice. Thus the Peace Conference became, not a realization of the American statesman's idealistic theories, but a triumph of vindictive hate.

Austria-Hungary, once a realm of nearly three hundred thousand square miles and fifty million people, was almost wiped out. But Germany fared cruelly too. The proud Reich lost its navy, its army (reduced to a nominal "home guard" of volunteers), its colonial empire (1,027,820 square miles of overseas possessions), besides upper Silesia, Alsace-Lorraine and that oddly carved tract through Prussia known henceforth as the Polish Corridor.

This was a far cry from the peace envisioned by Karl and Zita during their hopeful negotiations with the Entente. It also drew critical commentary from diverse members of the Paris conference, among them General Jan Christiaan Smuts, who had come to France as delegate for the Union of South Africa.

Highly esteemed throughout the world for his liberalism, the famous Boer submitted a written protest denouncing the spirit of the reparations committee:

"The indemnities which this treaty proposes to exact from Germany and her allies cannot be enforced and collected without grave impairment to the industrial structure of Europe. I insist that the true interest of the Allied Powers ought to be the creation of conditions which are both tolerable and within the scope of reason."

Woodrow Wilson, who likewise recognized great inequities in the treaty he had helped to make, looked confidently toward a League of Nations as the means of rectifying such wrongs, once the passions of conflict died down. But the United States did not enter the League. Whether or not Wilson's idealistic conception of its function was entirely chimerical or that conception could ever have been, in the best of governance, effective for long, remained a moot question. Actually, the League developed in the opposite direction. As the bewildered ex-Emperor Karl saw it, this "pacifist tribunal" became an instrument of evil, preserving the *status quo* favorable to the victorious nations by strait-jacketing the conquered and keeping alive policies of hate; it operated to insure the prosperous peoples of the earth against ever losing and the impoverished nations against ever gaining anything; it proved to be a man-made stoppage of growth, in the face of Nature's most fundamental law, the law of change.

Fifty years earlier, while settling some minor dispute, the Hungarian statesman Ferencz Deák voiced a pertinent parable: "If you button your vest all the way down and then discover that the top button has been left out, there is only one way to

correct the mistake. You must unbutton the garment and start over again."

Had the peacemakers at the Paris round table buttoned Europe's vest rightly from the start, with a sincere desire for a proper fit, humanity would not be forever trembling lest the stitches burst and buttons fly in all directions. Nor would Europe stand in danger of losing its vest, with nothing left from which to fashion a new one.

In short, a great opportunity for justice and constructive action was muffed at Versailles during that spring of 1919. The World War had originated in national rivalries, in military competition and in the conflict of economic interests rather than in the diabolical perversities of any individual country. The very enormity of the struggle gave rise to a hope that universal equilibrium would be restored and that this might have been the "war to end all wars." But in the outcome it became plain that national hatreds not only survived but grew intensified, that expenditures on armaments increased, and that the economic struggle would hereafter become more bitter. In time (most ironic consequence of all) the victors might wonder if they were not indeed the losers! Believing themselves able to emerge free from any burden of the cost of war, they would discover that the heavier the restitution made (in cash or kind) by the defeated nations, the more difficult it must become for prosperity to return to earth.

Fallen from Hapsburg eminence, Karl's spirit withered at the Versailles tidings. He was not gifted with prophetic sight into the future, but in his heart a mounting bitterness took shape. To think that the fraternal peace he once had offered the Entente had been scorned in favor of a nightmare such as this. . . . No, he made no more pretense at understanding civilization; his

faith in man had been destroyed by the thought of innocent generations who must someday pay for folly not their own. Nor was Karl able to draw comfort from a sense of unique and righteous indignation, since the victors at Versailles were but a cross-section of mankind at large. Human nature being what it is, there could hardly remain the slightest doubt that, if the tipping of the scales had been reversed and the Central Powers had carried the war to a triumphant and shattering conclusion, they would have enforced an equally disastrous, equally brutal and hideous peace.

PART THREE

THE KING

CHAPTER 12

ON Armistice Day the Emperor Karl renounced his Austrian throne. He did so not only on the advice of Professor Heinrich Lammasch, last Premier of the crumbling realm, but due to an inner conviction that the tide of history had grown too strong to stem. The tocsin of revolt was sounding through the land, bearing the tidings of a new freedom which could be attained only by throwing the past into the discard. The wave of Bolshevism sweeping Russia and Poland had entered the Danube sphere through the logical Slav channels of Bohemia. By means of secretly printed pamphlets, open agitation, bribery and well-aimed demagoguery the Empire's hungry masses were incited against the very name of Hapsburg. Karl and Zita, Viennese burghers learned in daily newspaper editorials, were responsible for Austria's misery. The Empress, being Italian by origin, had undoubtedly betrayed the Central Powers by selling plans of battle and defense to the enemy; the retreat on the Isonzo and the disaster of the Piave could be explained in no other fashion. Down with the Empire! Down with the royal pawns who had brought Austria to ruin!!

It was the accusation of treachery, coming from his own beloved Viennese, that made up the Emperor's mind. He could forgive the Czechs. Let them rally about their ardent leaders, Thomas Garrigue Masaryk and Eduard Benes, who had made a bargain with the Entente before it was too late. Let the Utopian theory of freedom for minorities be tested in practice; Nature and economics would soon disclose its flaws.

But there was a different kind of propaganda afoot in Austria.

A short ominous word was bruited about and whispered in public; it was the word *Anschluss*.

Could this be Germany's answer to the episode of the Sixtus Letters? In Karl's opinion it could and was. The unscrupulous Austrian Emperor, Berlin statesmen seemed to reason, had felt no compunction at seeking a separate peace which would have left Germany in the lurch. Well, two could play at such a game. Germany was inviting her racial brethren in Austria to break away from Magyars, Illyrians or Slavs, in order to join the family circle of the greater Reich. *Anschluss* became a catch-word dangled before thousands of war-weary impoverished citizens who had only utter ruin to expect from the peace tables at Versailles. Thus, Austria did not waver long. Rather than be parceled out among her enemies she chose union with fellow men of her own blood and speech. Disowning Karl and the Hapsburg tradition, Vienna led the way in voting for the Pan-Germanic scheme.

Needless to say, England and France thought otherwise. Their plan to weaken Germany did not allow for such subtle aggrandizement. The right of self-determination of small nations was well and good only so long as it did not affect the welfare of big nations. Having crushed the mighty Hapsburg realm, the Entente would force upon tiny Austria the very thing she was now too feeble to endure—political independence. Though in a special appeal to Versailles Austria pleaded for the *Anschluss* as her only salvation, the Allied Powers declared her a republic willy-nilly. She had a scant thirty-one thousand square miles of land (mostly scenery), a population of six million (one third of which crowded in or about Vienna), no industries, no agriculture, and a national deficit that defied accurate computation.

These questions no longer troubled Karl. Aflame with patriotism, he nonetheless was willing to turn his back upon those of his people who were ready to give up their birthright. If Austria no longer wanted him there still was Hungary, a nation with no thought of *Anschluss* or surrender even in defeat. Bismarck once had said: "If the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy did not exist, it would have to be created for the economic and political welfare of Southeastern Europe." It was to this ideology that the Ex-Emperor now adhered, and in renouncing the imperial throne he eloquently re-affirmed it. His parting manifesto contained placating words which, to the last, were aimed at all dissenters who were fanatically at work undermining the foundations of the realm:

"Abroad no one understands this corner of Europe or its special *super-national* mission. . . . Austria is neither a German nor a Slav state. The Germans were, it is true, the founders of the Danube Monarchy; but today they are a minority surrounded by ambitious companion races over whom they can rise as welcome leaders only if they give an example of higher culture, respect and generosity. . . . I have not the slightest fear of self-determination of small nations in a spiritual sense. If we guarantee to individual groups the utmost scope for self-expression, for exercise of their cultural creative gifts, joy in their own language, in a word, for their personal aspiration to be recognized as a valid nation, they will unite with us as never before and forget exaggerated grievances. Let the young be taught in this spirit; the old mischief-making textbooks in our schools must be replaced by new ones in which Austrian [Germanic] children are shown the great talents and virtues of the Slav and Magyar races, while correspondingly the latter learn what cultural benefits Teutonic energy has brought to the Danube region. . . ."

In stating these principles he also reiterated an important truth by explaining why the Hapsburgs themselves belonged to no nationality; they could not claim one without antagonizing all others. Their mission as rulers over the Danubian Federation stamped them as the only honest cosmopolites on earth. For this reason Karl's closing sentences contained a hopeful though naïve appeal for support of the League of Nations, to wit:

"I wholeheartedly favor an alliance among all countries after the peace questions are settled; there is no other salvation. I also approve any international scheme for disarmament. The instigators of war are either people without heart or fools who don't know what war means. But I have lived through battles, with men blown to bits beside me. This affects one's point of view. . . . Now the first and most urgent form of disarmament would be the cessation of mutual insults and accusations between nations. We all share the guilt of war; therefore we should all feel responsible for peace! Let us mend internal affairs so that no single state may offer a provocation for fresh disaster in days to come. Let our own Austria-Hungary in particular solve her problems and gain the confidence of Europe, so that we may offer an example of true unity among nations. . . ."

Such were the monarch's final admonitions, but the din of dissolution had become too loud. The siren song of freedom carried its own intoxicating tune which drowned out every other sound. No plan of royal reformation could begin to vie with mankind's newly discovered promise of happiness and equality for all in the long-awaited triumph of the masses.

On one point, however, the Emperor's words would score and be re-echoed in years to come; this was the question of the "war-guilt." In 1930, Sidney Bradshaw Fay, Professor of History at Harvard University, would analyze this moot topic and reach a

bold conclusion. In a scholarly work entitled *The Origins of the World War* he wrote:*

“One must abandon the dictum of the Versailles Treaty that Germany and her allies were solely responsible. It was a dictum exacted by victors from vanquished, under the influence of the blindness, ignorance, hatred, and the propagandist misconceptions to which the war had given rise. It was based on evidence which was incomplete and not always sound. It is generally recognized by the best historical scholars in all countries to be no longer tenable or defensible.”

In this manner, the world, over, nobler minds would strive one day to strip mankind of prejudice and to judge human behavior by a common law, the law of man's universal nature as against his individual idiosyncrasies. In his honest and blundering way the last Hapsburg emperor had taken full cognizance of these truths.

“It was not Princip who started the War,” commented Karl as he took stock of Austria's plight, “it was Principle.” (*“Nicht der Prinzip sondern das Prinzip . . .”*) The old order, incompatible with the new, must go. That was all.

Henceforth he planned to reign as King of Hungary. This office remained, after all, the only one to which he was legally entitled, since he had taken none but the Hungarian oath. The Magyar nation was intrinsically monarchistic; it would be no party to newfangled proletarian schemes, especially if they emanated from Russia. “All evil comes from Muscovy” was every good Magyar's creed. At Budapest the royal family would yet be able to preserve the venerable patriarchal system as of yore. Or would it? Two days after Karl had surrendered the

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Austrian throne a dispatch came from the Hungarian Parliament demanding that His Majesty's renunciation include the scepter of Saint Stephen as well. The Allied Powers at Versailles exacted this before signing the peace.

Here was a chilly drenching! The monarch paled at this astounding news. He could not believe it. Had not his sacred oath to Hungary been the primary cause of his alienation from other constituents in the realm? Hungary must not, could not, cast him out! It would be the rankest ingratitude, a shameful breach of faith. . . .

Shock and incredulity, however, failed to alter facts. The message in Karl's hands was further corroborated by a telephone call from Budapest that same day requesting His Majesty's answer. Minister Baron von Sterenyi urged a quick decision lest the impatient populace break out in demonstrations of violence.

Karl temporized. He spoke of granting an amnesty, to be followed by complete revision of the Constitution which would give the people everything they wanted. Hungary would have the most enlightened and modern government wherein the lowliest citizen shared in the affairs of state. But Hungary must remain a kingdom and he, Karl, was pledged to be its king. To renounce Austria, where he had never taken the oath of office, was one thing; but to lose Hungary, after having been anointed in the holy robes of Saint Stephen, was quite another. For the first time in his short career the young dynast balked.

He balked through most of the afternoon, with Zita clinging fiercely to his side. With ardent words she endeavored to give him courage and to save the last vestiges of his royal rank.

"A monarch cannot abdicate!" she exclaimed over and over again. "He may be driven from his throne by force; he may be

voted out of office; he may be murdered—but he can never abdicate of his own free will, because one cannot forfeit one's ancestral rights!"

"But what am I to do?" he asked, bewildered.

Her keen logic opened up an avenue. "Let them use force! You will then be able to return and to reclaim what has been taken away from you. But if you abdicate, there is no coming back. What you give up voluntarily is lost forever."

He marveled at her courage. She did not seem to think of the danger to herself and the children.

"I might be killed," he warned, "and there would be no one to protect you."

"Let them cut us to pieces!" she went on hoarsely. "Then Otto will rule. And if they kill each of our children, there are abroad other members of our family whom they cannot reach. As long as a drop of our blood survives, a Hapsburg will return—*provided you do not abdicate!*"

A sudden gleam came into his eyes. She was right. Why had he not thought of this before? Why had he not sought her advice in the case of Austria, which now seemed lost to him forever? But Zita was talking again, and each of her words gave shape to newborn hope.

"Even Austria is not really lost," she prompted, "since you had not yet held your coronation. Can you renounce a crown you did not formally assume? The renunciation is invalid. The throne remains unclaimed as it was at the death of Uncle Franz."

Her sophistries had the desired effect. With an extraordinary and very Latin sense of diplomacy she had provided a solution which saved faces for all concerned. No, Karl had no right to abdicate; he owed it to his children to keep their patrimony intact. But further obstinacy was out of place. He could not ex-

pect to live in either Budapest or Vienna, where he obviously was not wanted. The family must be moved to Eckartsau, in the country, until popular frenzy quieted down.

Trunks were packed hastily at Schönbrunn, where Zita and the children had been planning to spend Christmas. A detachment of palace guards stood at the gates, supervising the departure. Among them a young cadet named Erich Mann came to attention and gave the dethroned monarch his last Austrian salute. A moment later the rumbling motorcar dashed down the Schönbrunner Allee toward the edge of town and the shadows of the Vienna Forest.

At Eckartsau Karl received Baron Wlassics, President of the Hungarian House of Peers. The Baron was impatient to carry the signed abdication back to Budapest.

"Wlassics," Karl announced calmly, "my mind is made up. I shall not abdicate."

"But Your Majesty—" expostulated the statesman, "such a course would be quite without precedent—"

The King interrupted. "Never mind, Wlassics. Rewrite the manifesto and leave out the word *abdication*. In its place you may say that for the time being, and in the best interests of the Hungarian nation, I am voluntarily abandoning power."

The Baron's eyes became round and incredulous. There was a long moment of silence.

"Was there something else?" queried the King.

Wlassics gulped for breath. "No, Sire," he muttered, bowing himself to the door, "only—"

"Well?"

"It's very irregular," Wlassics murmured before disappearing, "very irregular indeed!"

With this the crisis appeared to have passed. After the new



Photo Koller Tanár, Budapest.

Zita as Queen of Hungary.

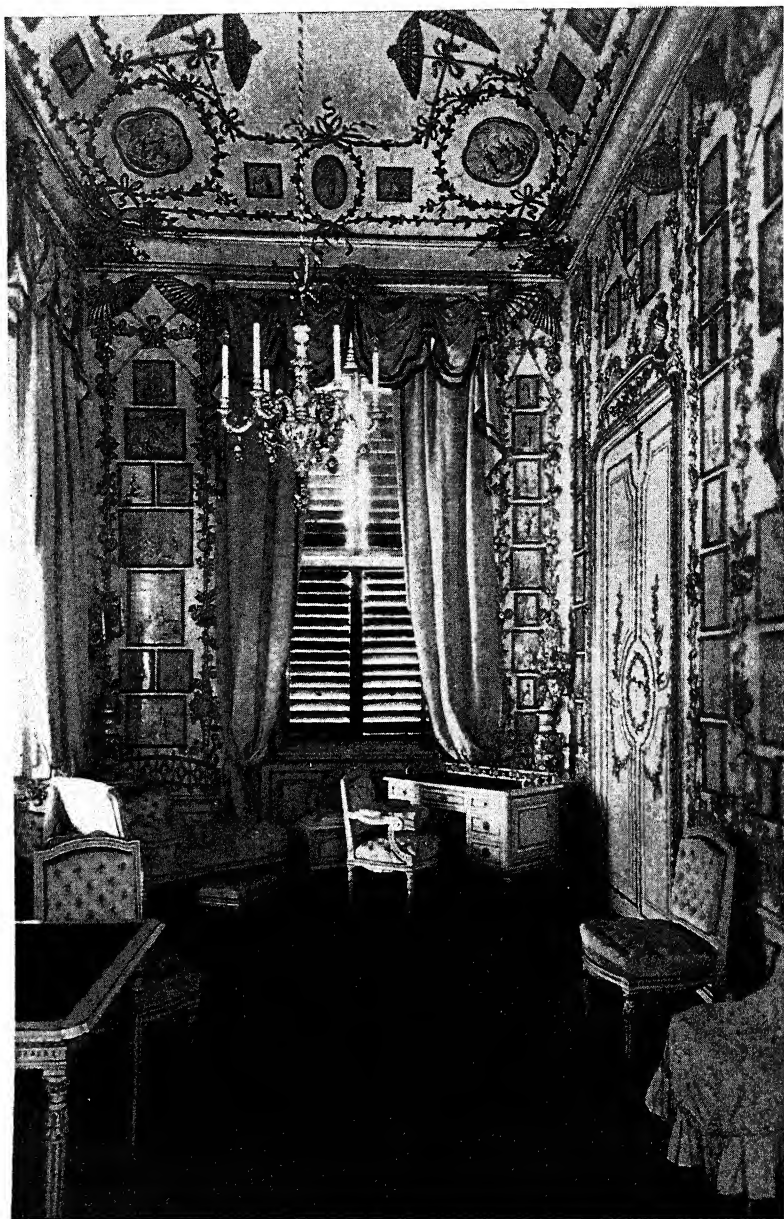


Photo Korthy, Vienna.

Famous Room of Persian Miniatures at Schönbrunn, used as boudoir by Empress Zita.

manifesto had been drafted and the King's signature affixed to it, Hungary proclaimed the republic. In January of 1919 Prime Minister Count Michael Károlyi was appointed Provisional President.

Karl and Zita meanwhile remained entrenched at Eckartsau, undecided as to their further plans. They spent a dreary Christmas week, without fuel for the heating stoves or more than the barest necessities in the royal pantry. Since the court exchequer had been dismissed and the new authorities in Vienna cut off the allowance for the upkeep of the dynasty, there were no attendants to look after the family's wants. Only through the help of loyal friends, among them Count and Countess Bombelles, were the former Emperor and Empress able to survive the rigors of that winter.

Why did they not leave? Why were they willing to endure such hardships? The reason was both grim and paradoxical: the King and Queen were without funds. As a private citizen Karl of Hapsburg possessed no fortune. The palaces, hunting lodges, summer villas, horses, carriages and other trappings which gave to the Austrian Court its glittering splendor had been confiscated by the new régime. Even Eckartsau belonged now to the state; a decree of evacuation might be issued at any moment.

To be sure, there were places of refuge abroad, but to reach these also required money. Unlike most monarchs, Karl had not yet learned that foreign investments proved comforting in time of need. There was Alfonso XIII who sat safely upon the throne of Spain and bought British, Canadian or American securities while royal coin flowed easily through his hands. Alfonso had no fear of a rainy day. An ample bank account, he reflected cheerfully, was the only adequate umbrella. But Karl

had found little time to think of rainy days, and it is doubtful whether his conscience would have permitted him to deal with Austrian funds in such a fashion. For, whatever else might be said of him, the last Hapsburg emperor was no opportunist. Rather must he be characterized as a wretched businessman.

Zita's family would of course have been willing to help, but all communication with the outside world had ceased and there was no way to let the Parma kinfolk know how matters stood in Austria. From day to day the royal predicament grew more acute until at last, during the spring of 1919, the authorities decided to take drastic action. If the King did not leave the country of his own volition, he must be expelled by special decree.

This brought the situation to a head. Karl himself realized that as long as he and Zita remained in the land they once had ruled, public demonstrations would not cease; their very presence was harmful to republican progress inasmuch as it kept the dynastic idea alive. Consequently they must obey the Entente verdict which ordered them abroad into permanent exile.

"Where to?" asked the King as the commission arrived to take him from Eckartsau.

"Switzerland," was the laconic reply.

Again the family packed its trunks and set forth on its wanderings, this time to an unfamiliar destination. Six children augmented the baggage, the youngest being a babe in arms. The older Archdukes and their sister, released from a shut-in existence, shouted with glee at the prospect of what seemed a merry outing, but no such joy lighted up the features of their worried parents. To Karl and Zita the future looked hopelessly black.

Ahead lay the long dark road of exile.

CHAPTER 13

THE royal train set out from Kopfstetten and chugged its way through the picturesque Austrian Alps. It crossed the border at night, heading for Wartegg near Staad on Lake Constance, where there was a fine castle. At sight of Burg Wartegg the travelers were cheered, since they believed that behind its noble gates they would be given asylum. But after a brief stop the journey continued onward to Prangins on the fringe of the Bernese Alps.

A small villa had been obtained through British intercession with the Swiss Government. Here the royal exiles would be allowed to stay, provided they did not move beyond the villa gardens where a cordon of police stood guard. As for their means of subsistence, the Austrian Ministry of Finance would set aside a stipend derived from confiscated Hapsburg properties. At best, this would be small, so that the ex-Emperor was plagued with worry about the morrow. For the first time he sensed the humiliation of not knowing a single trade that might procure him an income of his own.

The house at Prangins was not bad, except that it had almost no furniture. The children, exhausted by the journey, lacked proper beds to sleep in, but this was soon remedied by an appeal to neighborhood attics and storerooms. The newborn baby, Rudolf, profited by this expedient, for he was tucked away in the cozy depths of a borrowed laundry basket.

Altogether, life in Switzerland proved endurable. While

the rest of Europe faced the throes of reconstruction the exiles at Prangins knew themselves at least removed from danger. Their lot was certainly far better than that of the dethroned Romanoffs who had been carried off to inevitable execution in Siberia.

But mere physical safety did not ease the mental torment of loneliness and despair which took possession of the King. In the daily routine of his official life Karl had been accustomed to the pressure of state affairs, the stimulus of diplomatic business, the contact and fellowship of active men. He had never known a day of idleness, since his normal schedule had included a happy mixture of work and sports. Now he was completely lost. The inactivity forced upon him wearied him to distraction.

In desperation he presently found solace in that traditional pastime of fallen royalty, the chopping of firewood. Also he gave much time to perusal of the daily news sheet for reports from home. But the remaining hours dragged by with futile self-condemnation for mistakes made in the past.

It was not so with Zita. She had enough to do looking after her brood. Inexperienced in domestic chores, she nevertheless quickly recognized her sphere of duty. With gentle hand she washed the children, patched torn clothes, tended the baby and, by stretching the daily allowance for food, contrived to make ends meet. Also, at sight of her husband's boredom, she managed to restore to him a measure of usefulness; he must take over the education of the older children.

Each morning at eight o'clock the small Crown Prince, his sister and next younger brother were marshaled to their father's study for lessons in reading, writing and dictation. As the pupils progressed, and as the unhappy King's sense of importance grew, other subjects were added. Arithmetic, geography and music

(there was an ancient dilapidated piano on the premises) soon rounded out the course.

All this served only as a prelude, however, for Zita's most important plan. She well remembered that in Hungary lay the family's sole hope for return to royal rank and power, since, despite the Versailles dictum, Hungary remained constitutionally a kingdom without a king. Therefore Karl, Zita and the children must become "Magyarized," not only in speech but also in habit and manner, against that day when a summons from Budapest would call them back. They must give up their Viennese dialect and study the difficult Magyar tongue.

This imposed considerable hardship upon the family circle where up to then only Austrian—German with a southern accent—had been spoken. But Zita was adamant in her resolve. Having attained a throne by marriage, she did not intend to lose it through sheer negligence.

When after persevering effort a bit of syntax and vocabulary had been mastered, the Queen searched for Hungarian equivalents to her children's names. No translation seemed available for Otto, Robert or Felix, but Adelheid could be changed to *Etelka* (Ethel) and Karl Ludwig to *Károly Lajos* (Charles Louis), while Rudolf became *Rezső*.

It was also advisable for the children to learn both text and tune of the Magyar national anthem, since omission of this requisite might prove embarrassing. At the same time, Zita reasoned, it would be no mistake to commit to memory the songs of several other constituents in the former Empire, since one could never tell whence the "call" might come. Accordingly the King ransacked his brain for the stanzas which during his own boyhood he had recited with such automatic ease. As he evoked them now out of a past that was clouded by war

and disorder, Karl noticed an extraordinary difference between the famous Austrian "*Gott Erhalte*" and the hymns of the Dual Monarchy's remaining lands. More than a difference, it was a gulf. The Austrian anthem, strictly a dynastic chorale, crystallized the Hapsburg outlook and concept of empire:

"God save, God protect
Our Emperor, our realm!
Strengthened through faith
May he lead us with wise hand.
The Crown of his Fathers
Defend us against our foes,
Uniting with the fate of Hapsburg
Austria's fate as well. . . ."

How different in its approach was the opening verse of the Hungarian national song:

"Unshaken, to thy homeland
Be loyal, oh Magyar!
It is thy cradle,
It is thy grave,
It nourishes and shelters thee. . . ."

How searching the deep nostalgia that ran through the anthem of the Czechs:

"Where is my Fatherland?
It is where clear brooks bathe the fields,
Where forests soar above the rocks,
Where meadows bloom with gaudy flowers,
A paradise on earth—
This is my land,
My Fatherland!"

And the Rumanian battlecry across the wastes of Transylvania, Wallachia or the Banat:

“Awake from deadly sleep
Imposed by hardened tyrants!
Today or never, shape for thyself
Another fate
To which thy enemies shall bow. . . .”

Or the fine Slovak paean:

“Forward, Slovaks, still is living our true Slovak tongue,
While our hearts continue beating as a single nation.
Living, living—yea, and deathless—is the Slovak spirit:
Hell and lightning, death and terror rage in vain against
us.”

Finally, the inspired hymn of the Croats, linked with the streams dear to all Yugoslavs:

“Flow Sava, flow Drava,
Flow Duna [Danube], nor lose your strength!
Whithersoever you go roaring
Tell to the world
That the Croat loves his country
Till the sun no longer rises,
Till lightning blights his forests,
Till a grave is dug for his body,
Till his heart no longer beats. . . .”

For the first time the contrast between purely dynastic patriotism and deep-rooted national emotion was brought home to the King. Each song he taught his children, except the “*Gott Erhalte*,” gave voice to love of soil, of mother tongue and native heath. The Austrian anthem alone was anational or super-

national in its glorification of the dynastic idea, its elevation of government before country. The text itself struck Karl now as a trifle stilted, banal, like the fawning verses of some village school-teacher whose flock must make a good showing before the local burgomasters and aldermen. Even Haydn's wonderful music did not help: the song was at once condemnation and apotheosis of the Hapsburg *Hausmacht* (the Power of the House), so that, with Hapsburg's fall, the anthem itself grew hushed. In other words, there was no such thing as an Austrian national consciousness, but only a sacred and almost mystic loyalty to the monarchic principle. The center of gravity of racial consciousness, even for Germans under Hapsburg rule, lay not in Austria as a geographic unit but in the spiritual and physical homeland of Germany proper. This explained the quick rise of the *Anschluss* idea as soon as the dynasty had been overthrown; if Hapsburg no longer filled its function of empire, as arbiter-above-the-nations, Austria was left an alien in the East. With the triumph of nationalism, the dynasty's most mortal foe, it was to be expected that Slav would clamor to return to Slav, Magyar to Magyar, and German to brother German in the Reich. The fact that advocacy of the *Anschluss* had not yet become unanimous was due only to the presence in Austria of innumerable die-hards, who continued to think dynastically and to believe that a strong confederacy in the Danube Basin was an economic and a political necessity for Europe.

That the recent partition of the great realm into a group of squabbling minor nations would not prove an unmixed blessing was already manifested by current news from Croatia. The rustic and agrarian Croats, who had been turned over to Yugoslavia, complained that their position in the new state was humiliating and intolerable, since they felt themselves reduced to

serfs under dominance of their former enemies, the Serbs. Similarly, Hungary did not fare so well as an infant republic, for, scarcely three months after the King's departure for Switzerland, a Bolshevik revolution broke out under the leadership of Béla Kun. This scrubby agitator, of Tartar antecedents, overthrew the Provisional Government and set up a bloody reign of terror. Expropriation of the rich, persecution of nobility and clergy, ravishment, torture and executions became the order of the day, causing thousands of Magyars to reiterate their favorite lamentation: "All that is evil comes from Russia!"

At Prangins, Karl and Zita despaired. With such dreary tidings from Vienna and Budapest, their own prospects grew gloomier still. A pall fell over the improvised schoolroom, where the children learned their daily stint. The lessons in Magyar continued, but even Zita showed signs now and then of losing heart, since there appeared not the least likelihood that all this knowledge would one day be put to use.

Late in 1919 more alarming tidings came. Taking advantage of the existing chaos in Hungary, Rumanian soldiery were pouring across the border and overrunning the land. Already, by the Versailles terms, Rumania had obtained an enormous tract of Magyar territory; was it to be assumed now that Bucharest had sent out her troops to swallow up the rest? Grimly the beaten nation began to grapple with its oppressors and to raise a feeble battlecry: "*Nem, nem, soha!*" ("No, no, never!") And presently, out of the din of civil strife and invasion, that battlecry became associated with a name which spelled new hope and liberation. It was a name belonging to the past, to the days of old Franz Joseph, when Austria-Hungary commanded a navy; the name was that of Admiral Horthy.

Miklos (Nicholas) Horthy von Nagybánya had served as an

imperial naval aide-de-camp during the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the World War. In 1914 he received command of a small cruiser with which he operated in the Mediterranean, but it was not until 1917 that his great chance arrived. On May 15 of that year, flying his pennant from the *Novara* (and commanding two more cruisers plus a squadron of destroyers), he pounced upon a fleet of British "drifters" which were netting the Straits of Otranto against submarines. The attack proved disastrous for the enemy, but in returning to home waters Horthy encountered three British cruisers, the *Dartmouth*, *Bristol* and *Liverpool*, which on general principles turned about, opened fire and gave chase. The Austrians managed to reach Cattaro, but the Admiral was severely wounded and his flagship suffered such damages that she had to be towed into port. As a result of these exploits, which earned him eulogies not only at home but from the English Admiralty as well, Horthy was looked upon as a hero and given the high command of the entire fleet. But promotion proved an anticlimax, for the War came to an end the following year. Austria lost not only her navy but all Adriatic ports as well, and Admiral Horthy was left without a job. With a tall handsome wife and an assortment of horses, dogs and children, he retired to the run-down family estate of "Kenderes," in the country, where the sailor disciplined himself to be a farmer.

It was while gathering his first dubious harvest that Horthy heard the outcry of distress that came from Budapest. Not Béla Kun and the Communist rabble alone, but the Rumanian menace threatened to blot Hungary from the map, unless some savior could be found who had the courage born of desperation to deliver his people. Horthy did not dramatize himself, but he knew that he was the man. He knew that Hungary would follow him, if he but spoke the word.

Leaving his agricultural pursuits behind, the sailor set about to be a soldier. He raised an army in the town of Szeged (where not only the famed *gulyás*, but Hungary's crack foot regiments came from) and started his march on Budapest. In a month's time the enemy was routed; Béla Kun fled into Russia, and the nation settled down to the task of cleaning house.

The immediate reaction after the storm was a general yearning for the days of long ago. Alas, what could be sweeter than the old order, the quiet and genteel conservatism of a monarchic government in the hands of a benevolent despot? Nothing, opined weary Magyars. And so they joined together in a demonstration demanding the return of the King.

But Karl had been dethroned by the Allies who, in turn, had instituted the Little Entente—composed of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania—as a Danube police force which would prevent his return. Despite the new gospel of freedom for minorities to choose whatever government they liked, Hungary was not to be allowed any such choice. She was to like what the victors at Versailles decreed for her.

Given no other escape from continued internal unrest, the Magyar nation resolved upon a compromise. It did not want a republic, and it was not permitted to have a King. Very well: Hungary would regard itself a kingdom with an absent head, in whose place a regency must be established. The plan was laid before the nation and voted upon. Early in 1920, by overwhelming popular acclaim, Admiral Horthy was elected to the post of regent.

He accepted on one condition: that he be regarded a sailor, first and last, and that he be allowed to wear his naval uniform. These modest requests were readily granted, whereupon the stranded mariner took up residence at the Royal Palace in Buda.

CHAPTER 14

ALTHOUGH the entire structure was at his disposal, Horthy chose for his use a single wing (off the ceremonial apartments which, he felt, must be held ready for the King). Also, lest he himself be suspected of harboring any personal designs upon the throne, the Regent banished all court formalities in his presence. He was a steward, taking over the country's management until the royal office could once more be properly filled.

Meanwhile the attitude throughout the nation was one of abeyance; people lived in suspense, as though at any moment the old order might return. This was the more fantastic since Hungary had dwindled to less than one-third her size and what was left had been so ravaged by Reds and Rumanian terrorists that Horthy's White Army had reconquered a mere wasteland with an impoverished city for its capital. To visualize a Hapsburg restoration under such conditions was preposterous indeed. There was not money enough to satisfy the breadlines, let alone to finance the advent of a king.

But at Prangins Karl and Zita were blind to these facts. Through the Parma family they learned that Horthy had been appointed Regent and that his volunteer troops had brought back discipline and order. This caused the King and Queen to fall prey to a misguided optimism. The White Army, they told themselves, would be loyal to the monarchical ideal, since popular feeling throughout Hungary could never be anything else. What were they waiting for? This was the time to strike.

Prince Sixtus, meanwhile, had not been idle. Knowing his

sister's indomitable will to regain the throne (or even a mere semblance of a throne!) he was ceaselessly engaged in pulling necessary strings. First he discussed the matter with Briand in Paris, sounding French opinion with regard to a possible Hapsburg coup. To his surprise he learned that such a step would not be frowned upon, although publicly France could never countenance it, since she was committed to the support of the Little Entente which she herself had helped create.

What had caused this change of attitude? Perhaps a bit of duplicity on the part of Czechoslovakia. Not only did Prince Sixtus offer this explanation in his report to Karl, but Paul Szemere and Erich Czech gave a detailed analysis of the situation in their chronicle *Hapsburg's Road from Wilhelm to Briand*. According to the latter, France had become disgusted at the Prague government's open flirtation with Communism, while on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris an anti-Bolshevik régime held forth. In bold defiance of Czechoslovakia's Allied helpers, Tusar (Socialist President of the Czech Ministry) carried on negotiations with the Red leader, Budjenny, whose militant hordes had reached the gates of Warsaw. Briand had been endeavoring to build up Poland as a bulwark against Bolshevism, when a shipment of French arms, going through Czechoslovakia, was confiscated by a border patrol with orders from Tusar. This was incredible! It could not but be regarded as the grossest repudiation of Masaryk's pledge to further French policy in the East. At any rate, the Quai d'Orsay soon found itself regretting the careless and haphazard partition of the Hapsburg realm; it covertly began to favor restoration of Karl to the throne of a dwarfed Austria-Hungary. Not only would Western conservatism be saved by such a move, but another undesirable phenomenon—the Balkanization of the Danube

Basin, reaching into the very heart of Europe—might be checked. Alas, the gentlemen at Versailles realized to late what they had done. The generous theories of Mr. Wilson, a man unfamiliar with Balkan psychology and the atmosphere of the Levant, had opened the gates of the West to an influx of races, jargons, customs and ethics incompatible with (and certainly inferior to) European standards. Leading Continental nations might well live to regret the insidious flavors of the Orient thrust under their very noses by the noble stream over which Hapsburg had once stood guard against Tartar and Turk.

Among the first to recognize this danger was Aristide Briand. He urged Sixtus of Parma to engineer a plot for restoration of a Danube monarch. If Karl and Zita lacked the courage, there might be other Hapsburgs available: the Archduke Friedrich, his son Albrecht, or Karl's younger brother Maximilian . . .

"But," added the wily Briand, "the French Government cannot finance such a move or openly acknowledge itself a party to it."

"Then how is my brother-in-law to proceed?" asked Sixtus, puzzled.

Blandly the Briand eyebrows rose. "Let him serve us a *fait accompli*. Once he has seized power by strategy or force, we shall of course be called upon to protest. But we shall make only a mild outcry—enough to save appearances, nothing more."

In addition, Sixtus learned that French capitalists were not subject to the restrictions faced by their government. The Paris financier Louis Loucheur would supply Magyar Legitimists with adequate funds, provided he received something in exchange: control of the Hungarian railroads. Through a Budapest industrialist, Halmos Károly by name, the transaction would be carried out.

Burdened with information, Prince Sixtus hastened to Prangins where he confronted the impatient King and Queen.

"We accept," Zita exclaimed at once, "we shall go back tomorrow!"

Then she remembered that she was pregnant and that, due to the imminence of her seventh *accouchement*, she could not risk taking part in so adventurous a trip. It would never do, the Queen told herself, to break down en route with labor pains. Besides, someone ought to remain behind to cover up her husband's tracks, in case the Swiss police grew suspicious at not seeing him on his daily walks and came to investigate.

Like his tragic great uncle, the Archduke Maximilian, who had vacillated at Miramar before venturing overseas to Mexico, Karl vacillated now. Since the whole undertaking hinged upon complete secrecy, he favored postponement until summer when there would be more bustle and movement of travelers abroad, which might insure him against being recognized along the way. Also, this would give the royalist party in Hungary a better chance to prepare for his coming. And lastly, but most important of all, Zita ought not to be left facing the ordeal of childbirth alone.

Sixtus agreed readily enough to the idea of postponement. But Zita would not hear of it.

"Every minute counts!" she admonished with an earnestness not unlike that of the Belgian Charlotte who had once longed to become Empress of Mexico.

As for her own person, Zita had no fear. The bearing of royal babies did not seem to her an "ordeal"; it was her business, and she would attend to it in her own fashion. If only she could do as much for Karl!

At length her arguments prevailed and the King's wavering

mind was made up. Properly masqueraded and under cover of darkness Karl must slip out of Prangins and across the Swiss border. Prince Xavier and Prince René of Parma were already stationed as advance agents in Vienna; they would make contact with Count Erdödy and Karl's representative at Eckartsau, Baron Albin Schager. Once across the Austrian line, Karl could count upon the aid of the Legitimists who waited only for a sign. From Vienna the path lay clear to Budapest.

There was some trouble regarding the choice of an adequate disguise, but Zita's resourcefulness soon came to the rescue. For some time past she had observed a resemblance between the tall young gardener of Villa Prangins, a Portuguese lad named Rodrigo Sanquez, and the King. Her speculations on the possibilities inherent in this resemblance had been heightened by the fact that strangers passing the villa gardens could be heard whispering to one another: "Look, the Emperor of Austria puttering among the flowers!" How could this confusion of identities be exploited?

Easily enough. For alleged purposes of checking his record the gardener was asked to surrender his passport. It proved to be complete with helpful data, the seal of Portugal and an acceptable photograph which bore out the slight resemblance between servant and king. To further this resemblance Karl allowed his small British mustache to grow another half inch. Next, he "borrowed" the gardener's spare working clothes, pocketed the passport (for which Sixtus had obtained an Austrian visa) and set out on the morning of March 25, 1921, for the frontier.

He had no trouble crossing the line and boarding the Orient Express, which had only recently reopened the service: Paris—Vienna—Constantinople. In keeping with his humble appear-



Countess Ljubica Bombelles, wife of the Imperial Adjutant Josef Bombelles
(whose father was the tutor of Maximilian of Mexico).



Photo Koller Tanár, Budapest.

Admiral Horthy, Regent of Hungary.

ance, the purported Rodrigo Sanquez of course did not purchase a ticket for either first or second class; he mingled instead with a jostling crowd of peasants who scrambled into a dusty carriage of the third. Here, amid vegetable baskets, laughing wenches, bawling infants and an assortment of other cargo, the King sat quietly on a hard wooden bench. The car was draughty and he coughed a little. Whenever he coughed the ill-fitting black glasses which he wore slipped from his nose, causing him to fumble for them with a nervous gesture.

It was late evening on Good Friday when the train arrived at the *Westbahnhof* in Vienna. Counting a few coins from his pocket, the "Portuguese" traveler picked up his cloak, a handbag and a knapsack, before jumping from the third class coach. Leaving the station on foot he walked three blocks before hailing a taxi.

"To the Bristol," he told the driver. But as the famous hotel came into view the traveler seemed to suffer a change of mind, for he leaned forward to shout another address. A moment later this too was changed, much to the amazement of the chauffeur, whose meter greedily recorded the added distance. Yet it was not a charitable impulse toward the cabman which prompted Karl's indecision, but rather a deliberate ruse to mislead the man and to confuse him with regard to his passenger's ultimate destination. The reason for such tactics was simple enough: the King had nothing but Swiss francs on his person. As soon as the driver reported this (provided he accepted the money at all) there might be an inquiry on the part of the police. By rolling about Vienna in crisscross patterns Karl hoped to cloud the chauffeur's memory so that, if questioned, he would be too perplexed to answer.

At last, at a dark corner near the *Landskrongasse*, he called

a halt, leaped hastily from the cab and tossed a coin into the driver's palm. He was about to vanish into the shadows when a protesting voice detained him.

"Mein Herr—this is not our kind of money!"

The traveler turned back. "It's much better than your kind," he explained. "In Switzerland ten francs will buy a great deal."

But the other shook his head. "It buys no bread in Vienna," he said stubbornly.

At this, Karl remembered something. From the depths of his knapsack he produced a crumpled package of sandwiches and half a bar of milk chocolate. This priceless provender, more valuable in the Europe of that day than gilt-edged bonds, he pressed into the man's hands.

The driver stared, overwhelmed by such bounty. But he still lacked the fare recorded on his meter.

"Himmel!" he gasped sadly, for he had discovered a fat slice of ham nestled inside an appetizing bun. "But I must collect the money. My employer, Herr Boller, he marks the profit down in his book."

The sound of a whistle cut through the stillness of the night, a police whistle. It would be dangerous to be caught at this hour arguing with a cabman. Hastily the King pulled two bills from his wallet and pushed them toward the bewildered Viennese.

"Go to a bank tomorrow," he urged, "and you will be rich. But tonight, in the name of the Saints, pay this fare out of your pocket!"

With this he turned on his heels and dashed across the street. While the driver peered after him through glassy eyes, the stranger disappeared into the near-by Landskrongasse.

At No. 5 in this deserted lane he tugged at the bell cord until

it threatened to break from its moorings. A moment later the transom was lighted up and a woman's head bobbed cautiously through the open door. Karl recognized the Countess Danielle Erdödy, though it was obvious that the lady did not know him.

"*Bitt'schön* (please)", she demanded in that peculiar singsong of Austro-German, which is colored by Magyar overtones, "who is it?"

The King did not answer. He stood in silence, lifting the glasses from his eyes.

At this the woman pressed both hands to her mouth, choking a sudden outcry. "Your Majesty!" she gasped, dropping to her knees.

Karl took her arm and drew the trembling woman to her feet. Softly he closed the door behind him and wiped the sweat that had collected on his brow during the tilt with the cab driver. He asked an all-important question:

"Is Tamás at home?"

The Countess nodded. "Yes, luckily—since there is no fire tonight."

Karl could not help smiling. "Does he still run to fires?" he asked, amused. To think that in a world gone topsy-turvy old Tamás had clung to his boyhood hobby! But the Countess kept a straight face as she answered:

"He goes to fires now—professionally."

"Professionally?" Karl did not understand.

"My husband," the lady elucidated, "is now a fireman on the city payroll, as are other members of Your Majesty's entourage."

"Oh—" said the King, blanching. "Is that how he—er—makes a living?"

"Not altogether, Your Majesty. They use Tamás only at

night and the wages would hardly be enough. So he works at the stockyards in the daytime, cutting up meat."

Again the King said "Oh—," but this time the word made no sound. A moment passed while several details fell suddenly into place like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. . . . The absence of servants . . . the Countess opening the door because her husband, a man of two such divergent careers, must sleep. . . . Life had dealt no more gently with these people than with emperors or kings. How many former officers, Karl asked himself, had fared as badly as—or even worse than—his beloved friend Tamás?

As he stood brooding there came the sound of shuffling footsteps from upstairs.

"Dany," cried a familiar voice, "whatever is the matter?! Why don't you come to bed?"

The Countess placed a finger on her lips. "Sh—" she whispered to the King, signaling him to follow her up the narrow stairs. On the top landing she called out:

"Look, Tamás, who is here!"

At this Count Erdödy appeared, with bristling hair, his dressing gown and belt a trifle awry. Through drowsy eyelids he looked up at the visitor. And now the little man's round genial face lighted up, even as the transom had done below stairs, in a vast and radiant smile.

"*Dul Majestät—*" he babbled incoherently, jumbling the familiar and the formal address so that the King, though close to tears, could hardly keep from laughing. Then, without further ado, the two men stepped up to each other and embraced.

The Countess employed this interval to improve her somewhat sketchy toilet. Attired in her husband's bathrobe (which she had hastily donned at sound of the doorbell) the lady now

retreated to her boudoir. After a few minutes of energetic primping she emerged again, trailing behind her the faded glories of her best negligee. Nor did such amenity go unnoticed. At sight of the improved Countess, Karl bowed solemnly from the waist, while the lady herself doubled up amid her laces and performed an elegant court curtsy.

Erdödy had meanwhile found his tongue. Despite the deep affection that bound him to his master he now rebuked the King and took him severely to task for the foolhardiness of attempting such a journey, thoroughly unprepared and thoroughly alone.

"But you are wrong," protested Karl. "Sixtus made all the preparations in advance. Schager was notified to arrange things here and in Budapest. The people are waiting for me."

"Rubbish!" said Erdödy. "Sixtus has no idea of true conditions here or in Hungary."

"But Monsieur Briand sent me the assurance of his country's approval."

"Written?"

"Verbal."

"Then it is valueless. France will not raise a finger if Your Majesty's plans run afoul, as they must."

For the first time the King looked puzzled. "But Tamás, I was told the Monarchist Party had regained control—"

Erdödy's eyes met those of his master. "The Monarchist Party," he said slowly, "has split in two. There are the Legitimists who clamor for your return—"

"Yes? Go on—"

"And there are the Separatists, who still want a monarchy, but who reject a Franco-Italian queen."

"Zita—" Karl spoke the name softly and a faraway look

betrayed the swift journey of his thoughts. Zita was alone at a moment when he ought to have been at her side. Zita was ill.

"We were friends in boyhood," Erdödy was saying. "May I speak freely, as I spoke then?"

"Yes, Tamás. Tell me everything."

The Count braced himself and cleared his throat, before conveying what he dared not withhold—the unpopularity of the Queen. People saw her as a cold-blooded, scheming foreigner bent upon finding thrones for her quartet of brothers. The very partition of the Empire had been a Bourbon-Parma plot whereby Sixtus had hoped to gain Bohemia, Xavier the whole of Croatia and the Banat, while Felix and René looked for their portion to the East. As proof that the "Parma boys" were a grasping lot it was pointed out that Xavier, on seeing his prospects dimmed by the formation of a Yugoslav state, turned elsewhere for better game. He had just married the Grandduchess Charlotte of Luxemburg and, as Prince Consort as well as co-ruler of her tiny realm, he went about with a cluster of medals pinned to his chest.

Karl stood aghast. "And you, Tamás, believe this?" he asked in a voice that had grown hoarse.

Erdödy shook his head. "No, Sire. But what I believe does not matter. It is what the Separatists believe—"

"These—Separatists—have already chosen a candidate for their king?"

The Count paused to consider, then shrugged his shoulders. "That I do not know. They speak sometimes of the Archduke Albrecht, who is known as the 'Hungarian Hapsburg' because he was reared in Budapest. But there are those who favor Crown Prince Carol of Rumania."

"Not Carol—whose country was doubled in size at Hungary's cost!"

Erdödy nodded. "They seem to think this will bring back the lost provinces."

"But Horthy," Karl asked desperately, "where does Horthy stand?"

The other's tone grew impassive and strangely final. "Horthy is pledged to keep peace for the war-weary masses. His hands are tied by Versailles and the Little Entente."

"Ah—"

A note of cheer rang faintly through this exclamation as the King settled back in a chair. If Horthy and the Allied peacemakers were on good terms, all was not lost, since Briand's secret sanction would cover any helpful action on the part of the Regent. Onward, then, to Budapest!

Now it was Erdödy's turn to stand aghast, for he did not perceive the slightest chance of success. The King's very presence in Vienna was fraught with danger; even now the police might be on the trail of those Swiss francs the cabman had rejected.

But Karl was borne aloft on the wings of his new hope. "Here is my passport," he announced, tossing the document on the table. "I am a Portuguese laborer named Rodrigo Sanquez, who is depending on you to get him a proper Hungarian visa before tomorrow noon."

It was the Countess who at this point made herself heard. "What a pretty name!" she approved, rolling the Latin vocals on her tongue.

Erdödy gave her a pleading look, followed by a connubial hint. "His Majesty must be quite tired and in need of food. My dear, do you suppose—"

Whereat the good woman rose, gathered up her satin train and betook herself to the kitchen where, a short while later, she could be heard wrestling with an omelet.

Alone, Tamás besought the all-too-trusting King to abandon

his mad quest. He railed, argued, pleaded, but to no avail. With a humble, almost naïve faith in his mission, Karl had come to rest his case with his own people; nothing could turn him from this objective.

The faithful Tamás was fast losing ground. He capitulated at last and agreed, at the risk of arrest and possible imprisonment or death, to secure the necessary visa. This was not all. From an adjoining cabinet he fetched his own discarded passport, so as to be ready himself to accompany Karl on the dangerous trip to Budapest. If the adventure ended in disaster it must never be said that Erdödy, the loyal paladin, had not stood by his sovereign.

CHAPTER 15

THAT night the King slept on a sofa in the Erdödy salon.

At dawn the Countess rallied once more to the cause by demonstrating her post-war cooking prowess. Eggs were her *forte*, wherefore she dropped one into the coffee (made from chicory) and beat up half a dozen for a giant *Palatschinken* (pancake) to be sprinkled with sugar (made from carrots) and cinnamon (made by coloring the aforesaid sugar with grounds from the aforesaid coffee).

Next, while the men enjoyed this opulent repast, she brushed and laid out her husband's Sunday clothes.

"What's this, Tamás—" asked the astonished monarch, "you don't wear uniform?"

Erdödy shook his head. He gave a brief account—as brief as possible—of days when epaulettes were torn from military shoulders and crested carriages demolished in the streets. At the same time he proudly explained how Vienna citizens coped with the economic crisis: the clothing manufacturers, for example, had found a substitute for wool. This Sunday suit, which Dany had just finished brushing, was made from the fibers of the poison ivy plant.

"Doesn't it itch?" Karl wanted to know.

"Yes," Tamás admitted, "but we get around that by wearing undergarments made from paper pulp."

This drew a grin from the monarch's shocked face. For several minutes an air of frivolity hovered over the breakfast table.

The Count even recalled a famous Vienna saying, much used during the terrible lean years:

"The situation in Germany is serious but not hopeless; the situation in Austria is hopeless but not serious."

At the sound of the great clock from the Stefansdom, however, Erdödy was galvanized into action. Donning his poison-ivy suit and a Tyrolean hat with a genuine chamois tuft—"God be praised, we still have mountain goats!" he tossed back over his shoulder—the little man scurried downstairs and out into the street.

On the way to the Ballplatz a storm of ideas beset Erdödy's mind. What if, by now, the police had a full description of the stranger with the smoked glasses and the unaccountable supply of Swiss francs? The taxi driver could not have failed to give a fitting word picture—"tall," he must have said, "yes, very tall, slender, with that stride peculiar to cavalry officers." . . . Perhaps before he, Tamás, had time to return, the King would be a prisoner on the *Schottenring*, Vienna's Scotland Yard.

This being too awful to contemplate, the Count doubled his pace and reached the consular offices just as the doors were opened. He rushed inside to the private chamber of Baron Árpád von Nagy, Consul General for Hungary, and paused in the hallway to recover his breath. Then, having made sure that he would not stammer, Tamás brought forth his request.

The Baron, it so happened, was a friend and regimental comrade. He also belonged to a small list of favorites whom Erdödy occasionally favored with choice booty from the stockyards.

"*Servus*," he greeted the welcome visitor. "Sit down! That was an excellent salami you sent my wife the other day—"

Erdödy gave a deprecating little snort, although it always delighted him to see his labors appreciated. "Just wait," he said, almost archly, "for the soup bones she will get when Lent is over." As an afterthought he added, "With marrow—"

"Marrow!" The Baron kissed the fingers of his left hand and sent an ecstatic glance to Heaven. "It sounds too good to be true—and if it is, my wife won't be. Tamás, even my mother-in-law loves you!"

Erdödy essayed a smile before repeating the request which Baron von Nagy had obviously failed to hear.

"I need a visa," he said hesitantly, "for a man from Portugal—a very decent fellow."

The Consul General raised puzzled eyebrows. He marveled that anyone should care to visit Hungary these days.

Erdödy misunderstood the other's quizzical expression. "This man," he added nervously, "I can vouch for him, you know—"

Árpád von Nagy rose from his chair. "Did I ask you to vouch for that salami? Come, Tamás, your friend shall have his visa." With this he picked up a large rubber seal and stamped it opposite the smiling countenance of one Rodrigo Sanquez, native of Serra da Estrella on the banks of the Tagus.

Armed with the precious document, Erdödy now returned to the Landskrongasse where his wife, meanwhile, had arranged for transportation. A taxi would carry the travelers as far as Castle Sebenstein (belonging to the Duke of Braganza) a short distance outside Vienna. Here, hiding among the trees, the former court chauffeur Joseph Schlederer would be waiting with a private car.

It was almost noon when all the preparations had been completed and the party started out. Vienna lay bathed in sunshine as the disguised King and Erdödy were whisked through the

Saturday traffic. Behind his dark goggles Karl gazed eagerly upon the famous *Ring*, the *Kärtnerstrasse*, the mighty structure of the Opera where the world's most glorious voices had been heard. It was here, on the great *Opernhaus* stage, that blonde Maria Jeritza had played her memorable scene in Richard Strauss' *Salome*, which caused a furore among spectators. Here, too, the impassioned diva had hurled herself—as "Tosca"—down a flight of stairs to the edge of the footlights and, lying flat on her back (a feat never equaled by rival singers), had poured out the mighty aria. At sight of that magnificent body, swelling voluptuously under folds of revealing satin, male senses could not but reel. Karl, too, had felt himself stricken with that sensuous ache recognized so easily by all wives. Zita had recognized it. That night, on leaving the imperial box, she had worn the parched and slightly bilious face of jealousy.

How strange it seemed to be driving thus incognito through this loved Vienna of old. Was Sacher's *Kaffeehaus* still open? On one of its small tables Franz Joseph had danced in his youth, signing his name across the linen cloth. Lovingly Frau Sacher had traced the penciled outlines in bright silk, transforming the humble napery into a priceless heirloom.

The Hofburg rose from the shadows, its venerable walls steeped in historic legend. Here, in the days of the Biedermeier Emperor Joseph II, a world-famous clock had tolled the hours. On a certain night, while the palace lay hushed, Joseph heard strange noises emanating from the corridor where stood the ancient timepiece. His personal investigation revealed two straining figures, obviously those of furniture movers, endeavoring to budge the massive clock. But it was a job requiring more than four hands and two broad shoulders. Now Joseph's passion was popularity; no democratic office-seeker ever labored more

assiduously for approval from the lowliest citizen. Up went the sleeves of the imperial nightshirt; the well-manicured hands were moistened with Hapsburg spittle; and Joseph's untried muscle was added to the task. With muffled curses and labored breath the clock was moved from its station, expertly guided through a hall hung with mirrors and tapestries, and loaded into a waiting cart outside the gates. After an exchange of courtesies the Emperor returned to bed, well pleased with himself. Not until morning did he learn that the two hard-working fellows were thieves, and a famous Hapsburg treasure had passed out of history.

Other corners of Vienna were intimately linked with Hapsburg lore. The Prater, with its bridle paths and wooded drive-ways, had seen the famed equestrienne, Empress Elisabeth. Its shaded byways had been the scene of Archduke Rudolf's first meeting with young Marie Vetsera.

Again, there loomed up the splendid *Palais Coburg*, where once had dwelled Princess Clementine of Coburg-Koháry, mother of Bulgaria's Tsar Ferdinand. "Aunt Clementine," as she was known in royal circles, had fallen victim to a sad failing; she was stone deaf. Only with the aid of a huge funnel-like contraption was it possible for her to hear. The shape of this auricular instrument resembled an old-fashioned coffee mill into which, in lieu of beans, conversation must be poured. Since Clementine was known to have a most destructive tongue, fond relatives had long ago learned to keep silent in her presence, having discovered that the best of reputations could be ground to powder in her coffee mill. Even now, while the great mansion lay empty, Karl averted his gaze instinctively; he could not dispel the feeling that some prying ghost peered at him through softly parted curtains. . . .

But most prodigal in memories was the *Hofburgtheater*, the Emperor's own subsidized stage. Here Else Wohlgemuth, Kathi Schratt and Alexander Girardi had delighted Viennese burghers for countless seasons with their jovial antics. Here, too, a curious controversy had raged over a minor actress, Albach Retty (Buda-pest-fashion she inverted her name), who had been assigned to play "Rosl" in *The Spendthrift* (*Der Verschwender*). Theater devotees protested furiously that the newcomer was incapable of doing justice to the rôle. They picketed the Hofburg, shouting their complaints. All this while Europe was steeped in war and the terrible battle of Krasna, between Austrians and Russians, raged in its third day. General von Hötzen-dorf and Field Marshal Moritz Ritter von Auffenberg faced the Muscovite steam roller, aware that if the battle was lost Russia's way lay open as far as Prague. It was during the final hours of the Krasna advance that a frantic messenger tore from the *Hofburg-theater* to a small café across the street.

"*Sapristi*," he wailed in desolate tones, "the worst has happened!"

"What is it?" all the customers wanted to know, fearful lest the Cossacks had invaded Vienna.

"*Die Albach Retty*," moaned the messenger, "*sie spielt sie doch—die Rosl!*" ("That Albach Retty, she plays 'Rosl' after all!")

The listeners were outraged. The battle of Krasna had been forgotten. A truculent audience attended the theater that night, ready to hiss the unknown soubrette who, as it happened, turned in a glorious performance. On the following morning news headlines carried word of Hötzen-dorf's victory in stemming the Russian avalanche, but all Vienna read avidly about the theater's most recent find.

"That Retty girl," beaming citizens congratulated one another over their cups of chicory, "she is something, *ja?*"

With warm affection Karl now recalled these things and a sudden nostalgia gripped him as he reviewed his present untenable position. In this most beloved of cities he was today an intruder, a man without identity. He even lacked his customary military dress and, needless to say, he was ill at ease in mufti since civilian tailoring demanded the characteristic civilian slouch. This matter of mere clothing crystallized a poignant lesson of exile: royalty without its trimmings appeared somehow less regal. In uniform a king looked more a king.

Erdödy's thoughts must have dwelt on the same subject, for the Count was tugging irritably at his poison-ivy suit. "I feel sloppy without uniform," he grumbled under his breath.

"What do you wear as butcher?" asked the King.

"Striped overalls."

"And when you are a fireman?"

Tamás beamed. "A nickled helmet, Sire!" Plainly the Count's nocturnal job held far more charms than his daytime occupation. For the next ten minutes His Majesty was regaled with an account of every major conflagration visiting the city and its outlying districts since Candlemas. Only once the King interrupted. The taxi had come within view of the estate of Hetzen-dorf stretched out beyond the edge of town. Reminded by the similarity of names, Karl inquired about Austria's former commander, General von Hötzendorf.

"Do you ever see Conrad?"

Erdödy nodded. "Yes, quite often."

"What is he doing?"

"Drying dishes."

Karl wondered if he had heard right. "What did you say?"

"Conrad's wife washes the dinner plates and the Field Marshal wipes them," explained Erdödy. He rubbed his hands together to illustrate the process. Then, as a comforting afterthought, he added: "But it doesn't take them long because there are only a few dishes. The menu in Innsbruck, I am told, is even skimpier than our own."

The King frowned. "And my remaining generals? What has become of them?"

"Oh, they are doing the same. Boroëvic wipes in Klagenfurt, Arz at Sankt Wolfgang, the others here in Vienna. As for the younger men, they work in banks, theaters, streetcars. Geldern paints portraits, Schwammerl—"

"Schwammerl? I don't remember him. Who is he?"

"At cadet school, Sire, the freckled one who flunked four times in French—"

A grin spread over Karl's face as he recognized the description of a former fellow student. "Yes, yes. What of him?"

"Schwammerl is teaching French to the sons and daughters of war profiteers," announced Erdödy. "They say he is a great success."

The irony of this revelation was lost on the King because at this moment the taxi swept past an exquisite seignorial retreat, Schloss Schönau, where long ago Karl's father, handsome Otto, had entertained a light-o'-love. Songwriters of the day apostrophized the piquant episode with a ballad—"Schönau, mein Schönau"—which enjoyed great popularity. Sleepily the château lay now among the trees, unaware that Otto's son was passing by. The marble faun dancing across the park danced on, blowing his pipes of Pan as though in faint derision at the virtuous descendant of so egregious a sinner. Indeed, in contrast to his colorful father, Karl was a man of genuine piety. European



Photo Koller Tanár, Budapest.

Archduke Albrecht, the Hungarian Pretender, wearing the Order of the Golden Fleece.



Photo M.G.M., Hollywood.

Maria Jeritza.

history of the past century numbered but one other dynast of equal candor and integrity, Prince Albert, consort to Queen Victoria of England. The highest praise given to Albert was at the same time, in the eyes of ordinary mortals, a form of condemnation: he was "a thoroughly good man." No truer thing could be said of the ex-Emperor Karl.

But now the car had reached Castle Sebenstein where Erdödy paid off the chauffeur and set down the luggage on the ground. If the cab driver marveled that the Duke of Braganza's guests preferred getting out in the middle of the road and picking up their own bags, without sign of a footman coming to their aid, he said nothing. He may indeed have taken the strangers to be members of the ducal servant staff. At any rate, as soon as the taxi had vanished out of sight, Erdödy stepped into a little wood and whistled softly. An instant later the strapping figure of Schlederer appeared.

"*Servus*, Joseph," said the King, holding out his hand.

The man bowed, speechless. It was the greatest moment in his life; he, Schlederer, was being called once more to serve his beloved master.

"Where is the car?" Erdödy asked impatiently, for he did not want the people in the castle to be aroused from their siesta.

Schlederer gathered up the bags and made a motion with his head. The two men followed in his footsteps to a clearing where the soft purr of a motor could be heard. Five minutes later they were speeding over the road to Budapest.

The next twenty miles passed uneventfully, except that at Mönichkirchen the thirsty Tamás got out to buy a glass of beer. A short distance away lay the border town of Sinnersdorf and beyond, just across the line, the first Hungarian outpost, Pinkafő (Pinkafeld).

It was during the customs inspection that the difficulty started. The travelers had forgotten a triptyque, or set of customs papers, for their car. This meant that Schlederer, who likewise had no passport, would be unable to cross the border.

"Can we hire a car on the other side?" asked Erdödy with a nonchalance that did not quite conceal his anxiety.

The inspector shrugged. "*Dös kann scho' sein*," he mumbled placidly; ("It well may be.") With this he ordered the chauffeur out of the driver's seat and informed the others that they were free to continue their journey on foot.

Only now did Schlederer find his tongue. "There's deep mud between here and Pinkafö," he pleaded. "If you'll let me drive the gentlemen across I can come right back with the car—"

But the inspector saw through this strategy. Once the high-powered motor got away no mounted patrol would be able to catch up with it. Still, the mire looked pretty impassable in these swamplands and it did not seem quite right to make the wanderers walk across. Perhaps someone could be found to take the wheel.

"Ostrau," the inspector called over his shoulder, "can you drive?"

A lad in the sentry box stood at attention. "Yes, sir."

"Escort these men into the village."

It was thus that the travelers entered Pinkafö where the Hungarian gendarmerie in feather-trimmed hats came up to meet them. The Austrian sentry had meanwhile turned the car around and was about to start back when Erdödy caught sight of a gleaming object on the youth's breast. It was the Gold Medal for Valor. Obeying a soldier's impulse the Count stepped on the running board and held out his hand. The sentry took it, then whispered something that made Erdödy's blood run cold.

"You think I don't know *him* behind those glasses? You think I'd forget the day he pinned this medal on my coat?"

With these words the boy's eyes turned on the King. There was a second during which Karl must have felt the fervor of that gaze, for he looked back through smoky lenses and waved his hand in a mute gesture of thanks. A moment later the boy was gone.

He would not talk; this much was certain. But Erdödy could not help realizing once more how reckless and foolish had been the monarch's attempt to reach Budapest alone. So many people knew Karl. He was too easily recognized. During the War he had mingled frequently with the troops, visiting the front and climbing down into the trenches at the most unexpected hours, so that the soldiers had nicknamed him "*Karl, der Plötzliche*" ("Karl, the Sudden"). He was still like that—daring, irresponsible, full of trust. It was a miracle that he had got this far without being seen and betrayed. . . .

Well, this was Hungary, where the Legitimist Party had gathered its greatest strength. Matters ought to be easier from here on. The first problem being one of transportation, the Count inquired about the possibility of hiring an automobile.

"Automobile!" laughed the Magyar gendarmes. There was nothing like that in Pinkafő. Only some farm wagons of the sort that brought in hay from the fields. Lehner, the innkeeper down the street, might be able to provide a fresh team of horses.

It happened that Erdödy knew Lehner, for he had come through here in pre-war days on repeated visits to his family estate at Kőszeg. Border police might change with the seasons, but the tavern of Herr Lehner remained as an enduring landmark. For the moment nothing seemed more appealing than a bowl of hot Pinkafő noodle soup. Accordingly the travelers

shouldered their bags and stalked over the cobblestones toward the small inn.

On crossing the threshold Erdödy was to receive his second shock. For Lehner, a royalist of whole cloth, soon drew the Count aside and confided to him:

"That gentleman who is with you, Your Grace—I have seen him before."

Erdödy temporized by coughing elaborately and forcing an amused laugh. "How could you, Lehner? He is a Portuguese economist studying conditions abroad."

The innkeeper shook his head slowly. "I am not joking—"

"All right," snapped Erdödy in exasperation, "then keep your mouth shut!"

"Oh, that I will indeed, Your Grace," Lehner protested and hurried out into the kitchen. Nor would he allow other members of his household into the room. In silence he served the King's meal, carefully separating each dish or piece of cutlery touched by the royal hand. Later these humble objects would be raised to the status of heirlooms, locked away in special glass casings and kept on display in the Lehner parlor. (They are still there today.)

After the meal was over a field hand drove up the haywagon and the travelers climbed aboard. Rattling over abominable country roads, the vehicle bounced along to the next town, named Nagy Szent Mihály (Great Saint Michael's). Here lived a merchant, Hermann Schey, who was said to have an automobile. Since the King began feeling seasick after being tossed about for a brief hour on the wagon, Erdödy planned to change vehicles as soon as possible.

At Nagy Szent Mihály the lights were burning, so that it was not difficult to locate the Schey establishment; Herr Schey had

not only the best shop but also the best house in town. The automobile, alas, was propped up on a wooden frame for repairs, its four tires deflated and scattered about the garage. But Erdödy soon spied a beautiful landau and a team of spanking grays in the near-by mews. This would do perfectly.

Meanwhile Herr Schey and his two maiden sisters invited the strangers to a cup of tea. Ill from the drive, Karl stepped inside and thoughtlessly removed his dark spectacles. Erdödy tried to signal him but this proved unnecessary since no one in the family seemed to recognize the exalted guest. Obviously there were thousands of people in Hungary who had either never been to Budapest or, if they had gone there, had never caught a glimpse of the royal household. Magazine and newspaper photographs, Erdödy told himself, were often distorted likenesses. In short, he ought to relax and not look for a Judas behind every tree.

Tamás relaxed. He stirred his tea and chatted with the ladies of the house, both of whom plied him with questions regarding his charming but silent companion. Who was the tall and attractive stranger? What did he do? Erdödy decided to go far for an answer.

"My friend here," he said airily, "is a member of the American Red Cross."

It was the wrong cue. The elder sister leaped suddenly up from her chair and burst into a flood of English, an accomplishment acquired at foreign finishing schools and heretofore never made use of.

"I open the window," she recited proudly. "The book is on the table."

Erdödy trembled, knowing the King's meager linguistic talents. But Karl proved himself equal to the occasion. Nodding

appreciatively to the Anglophile, he turned his attention so as to encompass every person in the room and continued the conversation in German. This looked like the essence of politeness and was interpreted as such.

However, no sooner had this hazard been skirted than a real calamity occurred when one of the hostesses rang a bell and a maid appeared from the kitchen with a tray of cakes. At sight of the strangers the servant emitted a shriek, dropping her burden with a loud clatter.

"*Jézus Mária!*" she exclaimed, wringing her hands. "*A Király . . .*" ("Jesus and Mary! The King . . .")

It developed that the girl had worked during the War as a cook in Baden where, for a time, the imperial headquarters had been established. She had seen Karl and Zita every day.

Realizing that it would be impossible to preserve the King's incognito any further, Erdödy divulged the truth and allowed Herr Schey to notify his fellow townsmen, all of whom were loyal monarchists. In a trice the local police siren was heard and a deputation of city elders appeared before the portals of the Schey homestead. To the accompaniment of band music a cheering crowd united in the national anthem:

"Isten áld meg a magyart . . ."

In the midst of this acclaim the Schey landau pulled up, drawn by prancing steeds. Erdödy and the King piled in, smiling and waving their arms to the enthusiastic crowd which escorted the carriage far beyond the edge of town.

"You see, Tamás," said Karl, exultant with optimism, "Hungary wants me back!"

CHAPTER 16

ERDÖDY did not share his master's sanguine mood. However moving and spontaneous the ovation they had just witnessed, it was not officially sanctioned and had no bearing whatever on the political temper of Budapest. It might even work as a boomerang because, being premature, this popular outburst could spread the news of Karl's return before a proper stage had been set. Enemies of the restoration, notably the Little Entente, would be aroused to action long before the King arrived in his capital and made contact with his own party. Already, as Karl progressed by tedious stages from one hinterland village to the next, telephone wires might be buzzing while the lightning speed of telegraph tickers spread the alarm to every capital.

As it happened, the good people of Nagy Szent Mihály seemed to sense the King's dangerous position. Instinctively they kept their counsel and guarded their tongues so that not even the faintest whisper of disloyalty spread beyond the borders of the town.

Even so, Erdödy saw little reason for optimism. He leaned back against the leather cushions, brooding gloomily, while the carriage rolled on through the night. Occasionally in the light of a lantern he perceived the hallmark of Hungarian highways, interminable patches of manure; this Magyar land, it made a fetish of cattle and horse breeding. The age of motoring left not the slightest impression, or rather, it emphasized the ever-present beast as a prime factor in the daily scene, for paved asphalt roads made the dung more noticeable. Good Magyar that he was,

Erdödy saw that this was so and that nothing much could be done about it.

Long after midnight the old houses of Szombathely (now Steinamanger) came into view and the landau halted before the Bishop's Palace where a feast appeared to be in progress. The whole building as well as the adjoining cathedral glittered with a myriad candles. The King veered suddenly about and jerked his companion's sleeve.

"Tamás," he recalled, "it's Easter Sunday!"

Erdödy nodded in agreement before leaping from the carriage and mounting the episcopal steps. He jerked the bell cord with vehemence. A porter opened the doors and admitted the visitors, who promptly inquired for His Eminence, Bishop Mikes. On soft-soled slippers a lay brother hastened upstairs toward the refectory where the merry prelate and his priests had gathered since the night before to celebrate the rising of the Lord.

Obviously interruptions were not taken amiss, for there followed the instant commotion of someone rushing through upper corridors in eager haste.

"Let me do the talking," Erdödy warned the King.

Waving his napkin, the Bishop came to the stair landing. He recognized Erdödy at once. "Tamás, you scamp," he called down, "what do you mean dropping in at this hour of night, when I've a house full of guests?"

"Your Eminence—" gulped Erdödy as he mounted two steps at a time. Karl, who had donned glasses again, followed behind.

"Oh, ho!" the Bishop laughed jovially. "This time, I take it, you want *two* beds. Well, I haven't any." He turned to the stranger and explained with an apologetic air, "One has to be

severe with Tamás, you know. He thinks nothing of eating your pantry bare and taking your warmest quilt to cover his horse."

Karl smiled and removed his spectacles. "Mikes, do you know me?"

In the dim corridor the Bishop could not see. "No, I don't," he said, puzzled, "although the voice—the voice—"

Erdödy spoke. "His Majesty, the Apostolic King!"

At this the ecclesiast drew back in shock. Then he spread out his arms and embraced Karl, bidding him a thousand welcomes. Next he hurried down the hall to the Conversation Room where the dinner guests had just gathered for their demi-tasse.

"Brethren," he cried out, almost hysterically, "the King is here!"

A deathly silence hung over the room. Among the distinguished diners there happened to be a member of the government, the Minister of Welfare, Dr. Joseph Vass from Budapest. After bowing to the apparition (it was impossible to believe that Karl was anything but a ghost) all those present looked at Vass. What would he do? Did he dare pay homage to the de-throned monarch?

It was a difficult and embarrassing moment, broken at last by a few crisp words from the government official:

"Your Majesty, has Budapest been notified?"

Karl shook his head. It was his intention, he explained, to call on Horthy tomorrow and to take over the reins of state.

The Minister's lip curled in a sardonic smile. Vass obviously censured the King's self-confidence and his naïve talk of "taking over" such an accredited and stable government as Horthy had built up. In spirit, Karl must still be a puerile novice—a trusting, inexperienced boy, too foolhardy for his own good. Decidedly

the monarch must be warned of the danger lying ahead of him.

Karl failed to read the anxiety etched now on every face. It never had occurred to him that in due time Horthy's government would call him to the throne, but that, by not waiting for the call, he was precipitating a crisis for this government and also alienating the Regent himself. Somehow Zita had made it all seem quite simple; with her aid Karl had even drawn up a short manifesto to be proclaimed on his arrival in Budapest. It read:

"Following the dictates of my heart, I have re-entered my beloved country, to shoulder its government from this day forth. KARL."

It did not look now as though that manifesto would find a hearing. Erdödy, quick to sense dissonances, asked whether his good friend, Baron Anton Lehár (brother of the famous composer), was still commandant of the local garrison. Bishop Mikes nodded and offered to send a messenger to Colonel Lehár's quarters. At the same time Albin Lingauer, editor of the journal *Vasvarmegye* and a Legitimist parliamentarian, was summoned to the episcopal mansion.

The group relapsed into silent waiting when Vass rose to make a sudden disclosure.

"Prime Minister Teleky is in this neighborhood for the hunt."

The news dropped like a bombshell. It was followed by a chorus of questions. Where? At whose house could the Premier be reached?

Vass elucidated. "He is at Ivancz, the estate of Count Sigray, only a stone's throw from the town."

Karl favored going there at once, but Erdödy restrained him. "The Premier must come to Your Majesty," he whispered, "not Your Majesty to the Premier."

Thus a third messenger went forth, while the company settled down to wait. It was not long before Lehár and Lingauer arrived, eager to see the King. The Colonel, still limping from a war injury, had brought along half his regiment to line up in the courtyard as an honor guard; two cavalry officers, Baron Rohonczy and Ladislaus Almássy, would do adjutant duty.

Shortly before two o'clock Count Paul Teleky, Prime Minister of Hungary, drove up with his host, Anton Sigray. The meeting which ensued took on official character as the King made clear his purpose and read aloud his manifesto. Tactfully the Premier listened. Then, in a bland voice, he begged His Majesty to reconsider the dangerous march on Budapest.

"Dangerous?" asked Karl, astonished.

Teleky nodded. "Quite. The Little Entente may mobilize at any moment, using Your Majesty's—er—irregular return as pretext to swallow up what is left of Hungary." He did not add that Mr. Grant Smith, United States Relief Commissioner, was at this very instant a week-end guest on the Sigray estate, and that through the American the news of Karl's enterprise could reverberate around the world. This would bring action from the Big Entente as well.

"But Horthy sympathizes with my cause!" protested the King.

Teleky's tone grew somber. "The Regent is a public servant. He will do what is best for the nation."

Still Karl's confidence did not falter. With Lehár and the troops swearing allegiance while Lingauer and the press cheered from the sides, he felt himself strong. In deference to Teleky's misgivings, however, he decided against taking Horthy by surprise. A written message would be sent ahead to pave the way.

Since home tutoring at Prangins had hardly equipped Karl with a working mastery of Hungarian, Vass offered to take down the dictation in German and to translate at the same time.

But at the very start the letter writers hit upon a snag. How was the Regent to be addressed? "Mister Horthy" did not seem quite urbane. And was "Dear Horthy" sufficiently conciliatory when, after all, the recipient would be asked to lay down his high office? No one remembered that the Regent was a sailor with a pet vanity; he loved to be called "Admiral." . . .

While everyone pondered the weighty issue, the King hit upon a solution. "I shall give him a title," he decided peremptorily, proceeding with the dictation. "*Mein lieber Herzog!*" ("My dear Duke!")

A sudden commotion was set up, opinions clashing to right and left. "Never!" someone cried. "Horthy cannot be handled that way. It looks like bribery—"

The King flushed and turned to Teleky. "What do you think?" he asked, unable to understand the hubbub.

The Premier's voice was flat and dispassionate. "I think," was the reply, "that such a move would cast reflection upon Horthy's honor. The Regent, Sire, will regard it as an insult."

Therewith the plan was dropped and Karl returned to his original purpose of arriving in Budapest unannounced. Face to face in the Royal Palace, where the King had been anointed, he and Horthy were bound to find a common language; Karl had no doubt of it. As for the question of a title, it still seemed incomprehensible to him that the Regent should take offense at being elevated to the rank of Duke. Was this not the traditional—and only—way in which monarchs bestowed favors? He had wanted to be kind. . . . He had thought that Horthy, relieved of executive authority as steward for his absent King, might like to have a dukedom. That was all. . . .

The march on Budapest was now taken up in earnest. But Lehár, just as Erdödy had done a short time earlier, interposed

an objection which touched upon the essence of kingship. A monarch, he maintained, ought not to report like a schoolboy to the authorities in the capital: Horthy must come to Szombathely! In Budapest Karl was today a private citizen without influence or power whereas here, surrounded by loyal troops, he could hold court and issue orders as a sovereign.

This question, arising for the second time, exposed the weakness of Karl's dynastic armor and provided the key to his ultimate fate. He was the first Hapsburg who could not be called an embodiment of autocracy. Down the long line of his ancestors, absolute monarchs all, none had his casual, almost indifferent attitude toward personal pomp. Nor did he cherish executive privileges. With his constant urge to consult and negotiate, never too proud to take the first step in meeting others, he would have made an admirable president in some admirable republic. He was possessed of the essential qualification for democracy—distrust of leadership. It was the natural corollary to his profound distaste for domination, since Karl believed the function of a government to be that of a public servant rather than of a master.

At this very moment, when an entire garrison was ready to bear arms in his behalf, he frowned upon such aggressiveness.

"But I don't want to take Hungary with soldiers," he said quietly. "I am not *usurping* a throne, you know. And there is to be no fighting. I shall go to Horthy alone—not even Tamás is to accompany me." This was his standpoint from which no power on earth could move him.

Deeply hurt, for he loved the King, Colonel Lehár retreated to his barracks, while Erdödy sulked in plain view of all who cared to see. But Premier Teleky and Count Sigray exchanged whispered comments regarding the quickest route to Budapest.

If Karl decided to set out at daybreak they must get to the capital before him.

A comrade of Lehár, Colonel von Jármy, broached a subject which no one had touched upon, although it was on everybody's mind. Did the King intend to wear the clothes he now had on? They were not exactly ornamental. Should the political gambit succeed, Karl would be confronted by the Budapest garrison, pledging their soldierly oath. Did he plan to face the army, himself in an ill-fitting workingman's suit?

It was a reasonable question and one which Karl took in good spirit. As a born horseman, he liked the trimness of a uniform far better than the baggy clothes which he was now wearing and which made even his excellent sportsman's figure look gauche. Yes, Jármy's criticism was entirely justified. But where could one obtain a decent uniform at this late hour?

"The regimental tailor, Sire," was the Colonel's prompt rejoinder—"he can rush one through before breakfast."

"But the field marshal's emblems," Erdödy interposed, "your man won't have time to embroider a single oak leaf!"

For a minute Jármy seemed nonplused, but a lively imagination came to his rescue. Turning to Bishop Mikes he exclaimed: "The nuns in the convent across the road! Your Eminence, may we entreat the nuns to embroider the King's insignia?"

Mikes was somewhat taken aback. He had never approached the pious sisterhood in the wee hours of night, nor did he know whether the convent doorkeeper would be up to answer the bell. But he would see what could be done.

While Jármy hurried off to wake the tailor, a lay brother scuttled downhill to the Ursulines. He returned almost immediately with the good news that the nuns were all aflutter at this rare opportunity to render patriotic service. In a body they had

gathered in the sewing room where two of their best needlewomen would stitch the gold motif, while the others looked on and supervised the task. The work would be finished by sunrise, so the Mother Superior had promised.

In the midst of these activities Erdödy disappeared. But since everyone knew that the Count's country home at Kőszeg lay only a short distance away, nobody worried very much. In fact the good Tamás was back within the hour, bearing a small package under his arm, before any comment had been made about his absence.

As the broad rays of dawn crept over the horizon a tailor's apprentice delivered the finished uniform. It had been cut and put together in accordance with the measurements quoted to Jármy by the King, so that the fitting proved satisfactory. The collar trimming, supplied by the nuns, showed expert workmanship, no doubt due to constant practice acquired by the pious ladies while making gold-embroidered vestments for the Bishop.

Yet, when the King was dressed and ready for departure, there was something strangely drab about the general effect. The plain tunic, bare of ornament, made the boyish-looking monarch resemble a fresh recruit. He noticed it himself and wondered why he had never grown a beard to give him solemnity. It was a handicap to appear youthful when one had mature problems to settle; in fact, for a long time Karl had despaired at his own debonair and unforbidding exterior which contrasted so sharply with the hirsute and dignified King George V of England, the Russian Tsar (George's double) or the fiercely mustachioed Kaiser at Berlin.

"I look like a cadet," he admitted, a trifle crestfallen. "Horthy will certainly not be impressed."

At this Count Erdödy leaped forward, brandishing the pack-

age he had tucked under his arm. Swiftly he tore the paper while a batch of shiny objects fell clattering to the floor: Erdödy's wartime medals. Before anyone grasped what was happening, Tamás had pinned the decorations to his master's breast.

"But that's absurd," Karl scolded, "these are not mine!"

Erdödy's eyes had a level look as he replied: "They were given me by you, Sire."

Disarmed by this ingenuous proof of friendship, Karl smiled. "All right, Tamás, I'll wear them. Perhaps they will bring me luck."

He slapped Erdödy's back affectionately, then waved farewell to the others and started downstairs with Bishop Mikes, who was already late for Mass in the Cathedral. While the church bells were ringing out the Easter message Karl knelt for confession in the sacristy; he later received the Host, standing in line with young communicants from the local Seminary.

When the service was over a car drew up outside. Two men occupied the front seat, the collars of their military coats turned up.

"Christ is risen," Karl greeted them in the traditional manner as they leaped out to click heels and shut the car door behind him. Their answer was muffled by the sounds of departure: "He is risen indeed."

It was not until some minutes later, as the open road came into view, that the man beside the driver turned down his collar and looked around. Karl recognized Colonel Jármy's weather-beaten face.

"The Devil, Jármy!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

The officer grinned sheepishly and raised an apologetic hand. "Strictly on duty, Your Majesty," he mumbled, "I am going

to Budapest. Láczy, here, is doing the same." He pointed to the driver, who now revealed himself as Ladislaus Almássy.

Irritation colored the King's face. "Did Bishop Mikes give you such orders?"

"No, Sire."

"Well, then, who did?"

Jármy rolled guilty eyes. "Anton—" he began. "I mean, Colonel Lehár, and Tamás."

"I see," said Karl. He was very angry.

"They made us promise to—"

"To look after me, I know," interrupted His Majesty.

Pampering him, were they? Well, he would show them! He would put both these fellows out at the next crossroads and take the wheel himself. After all, why shouldn't he be his own chauffeur?

However, it was some distance to the next crossroads and in the intervening time the royal fury subsided. After a while the King tapped Jármy's shoulder, but he did not say what he had planned to say. Instead he offered a jovial suggestion.

"Climb back here, Jármy. I want company."

Whereat the gawky soldier tossed his sword into the monarch's lap and transferred his colossal frame to the rear seat.

CHAPTER 17

THE drive proceeded uneventfully.

Bathed in vernal sunshine, the wide prairie land of Hungary beckoned in the distance beyond the shores of Lake Balaton. To the left the winding Danube could be seen occasionally gleaming among gentle hills. Karl reveled in the bleak beauty of this landscape over which Attila and his hordes had once swept down on Europe; it had for him neither the confectioner's quaintness of Swiss scenery nor the grave splendor of Austria. Rather, like Scotland's misty moors, the Magyar panorama was possessed of a strange primeval mood.

At Székesfehérvár (Stuhlweissenburg), the ancient coronation city, the first Honvéd hussars appeared and the King felt his throat tighten at sight of the familiar uniforms. While he, too, had begun to itch under the mixture of cotton and poison-ivy cloth that went into his rush-order field-marshal's outfit, Karl gazed with covetous eyes at the fine pre-war levitkas with their gold galloon, their frogging and the border of rich fur. He did not know that breeches had been patched and armholes re-enforced by industrious Honvéd wives so that their husbands might march briefly in the holiday parade before storing their shakos and plumes in mothballs for another year.

Now the road veered to the northeast. The ubiquitous Hungarian geese began to disappear from the highway, while roadside shrines, built for the solace of lone wanderers who might go astray, gave way to urban churches with their onion-shaped domes. The metropolitan area drew near, heralded by the first

symptoms of industrial life: railway tracks, hotel signboards, factory chimneys and warehouses.

Still some distance from the city, Karl observed a large object by the roadside, which soon revealed itself as an automobile that had been pushed off the highway for repairs. A flat tire lay in the ditch.

"Stop!" ordered the King. "Those people are in trouble—"

Jármay ventured to contradict. "Your Majesty cannot afford to lose time."

"But they need help!" insisted the King, while Almásy drove on with undiminished speed, as though no potential wreck were in sight.

As yet, Karl was not ready to admit that he was not being obeyed. (That would come later.) The purr of the motor, he told himself, must have kept Almásy from hearing.

Colonel Jármay leaned back in the cushions with a sigh that bespoke relief. "Someone else will come along," he said reassuringly.

Yes, Jármay was relieved. For he had spied two unmistakable figures gesticulating in the road; they were the Minister of Public Welfare, Herr Vass, and the Hungarian Premier, Count Teleky, who had intended to reach Horthy before the King. While these zealous politicians and their car remained stalled in the ditch, Karl's cause was not yet lost and he might still win the Regent over before a general alarm could be sounded.

It was long past noon when the royal party approached the southernmost Danube bridge (at that time *Ferenc Jozsef Hid*) below Gellért Mountain and its medicinal springs. Karl wondered whether the curative waters, spurting out of the rock, were still whipped into artificial waves which lifted up the bathers like a billowing sea. During the War there had been a

rumor that the machine creating the giant rollers had been scrapped for armaments.

In the noisy square at the head of the bridge the Gebauer brothers, Rudi and Béla, ran their jolly establishment, the *Gellért Kávéház*. Rudi, elder of the two, was studying English in anticipation of peacetime tourists who, he calculated, would make lively demands on his cellar. "All very well *barack!*" said Rudi hopefully, praising his favorite brandy to hypothetical Americans who were certain one day to arrive. . . .

In circling the famous coffeehouse His Majesty gazed longingly at the sidewalk tables where the Gebauer brothers could usually be seen sampling their own hors-d'oeuvres. Partaking of Holy Communion only that morning, Karl had not broken his fast since the night before. He would have liked a cup of coffee. But again Jármy pressed on. A single moment of delay might spell disaster.

The car grazed a white and yellow tram while crossing the tracks and heading for the Buda citadel. At the foot of the fortress a small funicular railway threatened to disrupt traffic, but this obstacle too was quickly surmounted as Almássy swung his motor up the steep ramparts. Within sight of the pinnacled summit, which once had been the goal of Suleyman the Magnificent, the strains of a popular song echoed in the King's heart:

"I would rather live in Buda
Than upon the plains of Pest:
—Bastioned hills of lovely Buda!—
You may have the rest.
For on Buda heights the Honvéd
Hussars keep silent guard
In an empty marble palace
O'er an empty fortress yard. . . ."

He was coming now to storm that fortress, singlehanded, and to take up in that palace his sovereign and rightful place.

Two o'clock. The languor of early afternoon hung heavily in the air, spreading a cloak of apathy over the dual city. Red and orange buildings glowed in the sun, surmounted by the spires of the Coronation Church and the Crown of Saint Stephen with its crooked cross. Over the Danube rose Parliament House, vertical Gothic like that of London, but with a Renaissance cupola coated in verdigris. A tropic stillness reigned round about and lent a lethargic quality to the scene. It promised nothing, either good or bad.

The gardens of the palace seemed deserted except for a drowsy sentry in his box. The open piazza stretching out to the right was flanked on one side by the boarded residence of the Palatine, Archduke Joseph, and on the other by the Honvéd Ministry. It was in the latter building that Karl decided to wait while Colonel Jármy informed the Regent of his master's arrival.

Slipping past the sentry, who was scarcely roused from his stupor, Jármy crossed an inner court and ran almost head on into Horthy's aide-de-camp, Captain Magasházy. After an exchange of mild profanity the two men saluted each other and Magasházy started away when Jármy stopped him. In low whispers he reported that the King was in town.

A blank look came over the aide's face. "You're crazy," he said at last, poking a finger at Jármy's brow.

"Go and tell Horthy—then see if I'm crazy." Jármy replied.

The other twirled a small mustache. "The Regent is at luncheon and cannot be disturbed."

"I don't care where he is and I demand that he be disturbed," snarled Jármy. "You heard me—*the King is here!*"

Magasházy paled. "You mean—you are serious?" he stammered incredulously. Then, at the Colonel's savage nod, he went sprinting to the Regent's quarters. Ten minutes later he was back, bidding Jármy to bring the King.

Horthy meanwhile sat over a telephone, rousing his ministers from their noon naps and drumming them to the palace *en masse*. He had as yet no clear idea of what would happen, but he must prepare himself for any surprise maneuvers that might lead to a political crisis. Though he bore no personal grudge against the monarch or, indeed, against the House of Hapsburg, he must steer Hungary away from trouble with the Little Entente.

Jármy found the King strolling from the Honvéd Ministry toward the Christina Ramp, down which one could see the open-air riding school. Here, in palmier days, Vienna's famed Lippiza horses had pranced and pirouetted in the best Spanish style while connoisseurs came from afar to marvel and applaud. Where was that noble Arab breed today? Rumors were current that the princely clan of Eszterházy supported the stud farms of Fogaras and Piber as a haven for the homeless beasts—the Lippiza grazing lands having gone as war booty to Italy. It seemed incredible that sponsors of the vengeance-peace hatched at Versailles should stoop to so useless and odious a thrust as the destruction of a sporting tradition which had not its peer on earth. . . . Well, the prized animals at least were safe. From milk wagons, drays and *fiacres*, to which they had been harnessed, Prince Eszterházy was rounding up the high-strung creatures and spiriting them off to his estate where they would be handled as befitted their lineage. Fabulous offers came occasionally from horse fanciers and dealers abroad, but nothing at "*Eszterháza*" was for sale. The imperial steeds, among

them Franz Joseph's ranking stallion, Florian, would be assured of sanctuary and selective propagation until such a time (now, or one hundred years from now!) when a Hapsburg returned to place his claim as their rightful master. Let Florian meanwhile sire future champions, so that his breed might not die out. For it was through their love of horseflesh that Magyars, part of the Turanian tribes that once had settled in the Danube Basin, upheld their national distinction. Unlike Celts, Franks or Teutons, who had plodded on foot or jogged in oxcarts across Europe, the Ural Hungars had galloped over the Pontic Steppes like centaurs, blending their savage shrieks with the percussion of a million hoofs—a nation astride. . . . No, Prince Eszterházy would not sell!

From such reveries Jármy now roused the King. While escorting His Majesty to the palace the officer attempted a quick analysis of the situation as reflected through the attitude of Horthy's aide-de-camp. It must not be forgotten, he warned, that every change of government brought about discontent and fear of demotion among pettier satellites who saw their own aspirations blighted. Thus the reception inside the palace might be chilly.

"Horthy is against us," was Jármy's parting word. "Your Majesty must be *firm!*"

With this he turned the King over to Captain Magasházy who led the way up the grand staircase to the Regent's wing. Halberdier guards lining the corridors and passages saluted the field-marshal's uniform, although their rigid stance made it impossible for them to gain more than a fleeting glance of the stranger wearing it. Quite against his will, Karl found himself still incognito.

On the upper floor Magasházy opened the door to a small un-

carpeted chamber and bade the visitor sit down and relax while Horthy was notified of his arrival. What was this? Karl could not have heard correctly. Surely he had not been asked to wait—wait!—for a former admiral in his own fleet. . . . Something not unlike an electric shock galvanized his whole body into action as he flared up against such treatment. It was less his own personal pride than the concept of kingship which had been threatened. Jármy's "be *firm*" would not be needed any more; Karl had not humbled himself and come this far in order to be flouted as an ordinary petitioner.

"Stand aside!" he burst out vehemently. "The King does not wait in anterooms—"

Rushing past the startled Captain he pressed on in the direction of his one-time audience chamber where, he had guessed correctly, Horthy carried on the business of state. But it was now that the monarch underwent a painful experience. The way to the Regent's inner sanctum was dotted with officials, lackeys, doormen, all of whom took not the slightest notice. Not only did they fail to salute, which the halberdiers downstairs had done without delay, but they obviously knew Karl's identity and had conspired among themselves to show him no obeisance. Two flunkys standing guard at Horthy's door went so far as to ignore the King's request for passage.

Were these the malcontents of whom Jármy had spoken? Was servility so wedded to opportunism that it turned into churlish arrogance at the mere whisper of danger? What danger? Surely the King's return to Hungary would cost no man his job—no man except Horthy, and Karl had planned for Horthy a munificent reward. Munificence presupposed, of course, that the gambit of restoration did not fail.

From somewhere came the sound of footsteps. Karl listened

hopefully. Perhaps Horthy (who must be expecting him) would march right through that door and spread out his arms in a fitting gesture of welcome. No, this was certainly not going to happen. The footsteps vanished.

Should he knock? That would be grotesque. In palaces one followed a symbolic etiquette which frowned upon royalty unlocking its own portals; again this betokened respect, not for the individual, but for the office with which he was invested. Well, it was plain that no one cared about that office now, and that whoever wished to cross any thresholds hereabouts must do his own unlatching. Without further ado, Karl reached for the knob. A moment later he stood in the presence of Admiral Miklos Horthy von Nagybánya, Regent of Hungary.

A poignant interview followed. But from the start the dice were loaded against the King. No argument or plea could counterbalance the enormous disadvantage of his having plunged alone into the enemy camp—and by the very nature of current world conditions Horthy's government represented that camp. Moreover, the Regent had displayed extraordinary strategy in refusing to go out of his way as an aggressor; the War had taught him that defense is easier and less exhausting than offense. Thus he had waited quietly at his desk for the foolish young King to stumble up to him. While Karl strove valiantly to formulate a verbal attack, Horthy leaned comfortably back to review before his mental eye a galaxy of master trumps.

"Your Majesty," he said, skipping preliminaries, "must hurry back to Switzerland at once."

Karl shook his head. "Never! I have come to take over the office you preserved for me—"

"It is too soon, Sire. The Entente forbids it, and our enemies will tear Hungary apart—Czechoslovakia is already mobilizing."

"Rubbish, Horthy," laughed the King. "I have French guaranties that there will be no protests."

It was the Regent's turn to laugh, a trifle grimly. "France will not fight her own allies, even if she favors Your Majesty's restoration. Let me assure you, Sire, that the time is ill-chosen. Switzerland, by the next train—that is the only solution."

"The Swiss will deny me admission, after my escape."

"That can be ironed out, if Your Majesty will hasten back before the whole world learns of this. I can make all arrangements and provide an escort."

But Karl was not interested in safe-conduct to Prangins where Zita and the children were waiting even now to follow him in glory to Budapest. At thought of Zita he suddenly remembered the persuasions she had advised him to employ toward Horthy. Despite the fatigue that gripped him (he had not slept for thirty-six hours) the King recited a most gracious speech in which he thanked the Admiral for all his loyal services.

"You will not find me ungrateful," he finished dramatically. "I have resolved to make you a duke!"

There! He had done it after all, despite Teleky's warning at Szombathely. Horthy would like it: Zita had said so. "He will be pleased," she had said.

But something was wrong. The Regent's face twitched sharply, just once, as a wave of crimson colored the weather-beaten cheeks. It was with visible effort at control that Horthy answered.

"To serve Hungary is my duty. I did not accept this post for the sake of winning a title. But it is now my duty, Sire, to send you away—"

Karl sensed his own demoralization, yet he was too desperate now to shrink at further loss of face. "I will make you head of

the army and navy," he went on miserably. His shrill voice was that of a petitioner rather than a donor.

This time Horthy tried to laugh but could not. "We have no army," he said bitterly, "and Yugoslavia sails our ships."

Karl's tortured brain sought for a final inducement, some lure which no man could bring himself to refuse. What was the magic formula counseled by Zita? She had called it a rare bonanza which he must save until the last; when all else failed—*this would not fail*. But what was it? Why couldn't he remember? Zita!

Ah, now he knew. Over the ether her spirit seemed to reach out to him—the Fleece, Karl, give him the Order of the Golden Fleece!

He rose. With pathetic gravity he offered Horthy Austria's highest badge of knighthood. Pontific blessings from the Vatican accompanied its investiture.

The Regent's answer was withering in its objectivity. "I am Protestant, Sire." To a non-Catholic the Fleece meant nothing. . . .

Now it was over. The terrible meeting, lasting almost two hours, had ended in abysmal failure and defeat. The King was almost glad. He had come back against his will in the first place, driven by emotional pressure on the part of Zita and her brothers. He had returned to claim the throne of his ancestors, not so much for himself as for his descendants, and theirs, that the chain of the Hapsburg succession might not be broken. But that the hour was premature—this he had known instinctively, despite his willful optimism. He had embarked on his Odyssey of humiliation with a strange fervor of self-effacement equaled by cataleptic martyrs of the Church who were known to seek unspeakable castigations for the greater glory of God. That

even the noblest of blunders could not accrue to the honor of either mortals or immortals did not dampen the true martyr's zeal. Indian mahatmas shaved their heads and chose a bed of live coals to sit on, for the pleasure of a stony Buddha.

Psychologically, Karl had been unable to turn back before the measure of his Calvary was full. Now he was prostrate and it cost him nothing to retreat. He had gone as far as the burden of his conscience would allow—that same conscience which had scorned the aid of Colonel Lehár's troops, although those troops could easily have subdued Horthy's small Budapest brigade. Because he had not chosen victory by force he now stood vanquished and reviled by a foe to whom he had brought triumph on his knees.

The world and Horthy accepted this triumph without reservations. An international press summed up the affair in coolly objective words. The *Manchester Guardian* wrote:

"The outcome of the interview between Karl and the Regent is best demonstrated by the fact that the ex-King was forced to leave Budapest immediately for Szombathely.

"Soon thereafter it became known that Regent Horthy had minced no words in informing Karl that the ill-timed visit was detrimental to the best interests of Hungary, since the country needed nothing so much as peace and time for recovery.

"The Regent further assured His Majesty of his, Horthy's, unchanging loyalty and devotion, explaining nonetheless that the mandate placed upon him by the Nation could not be laid down except by parliamentary procedure.

"At half past five the ex-King left Budapest in the company of Prime Minister Teleky, Count Sigray and the commanding officer of the Hussars, Captain Gjörgy. . . ."

Thus briefly the restoration playlet ended. While rumor traveled through the capital, spreading the news of Karl's arrival, the King was already being sped away over the road he had traversed only so short a time before. It was early dusk, and the still countryside lay splashed in the riotous colors of a flaming sunset.

CHAPTER 18

AT Szombathely the telephone rang. From Horthy's private chancellery Bishop Mikes received news of the royal fiasco. Together with this information came an order that His Majesty must be held in strict custody at the Episcopal Palace until arrangements were complete for his return to Switzerland. Since Karl's position was that of a parole violator, it became necessary to placate the Swiss Government before he could again find asylum under its flag. This consequence had not been thought of by Zita and her brothers when they urged the monarch into his unhappy venture.

As for Karl, he did not care very much what happened. Throughout the return journey his cheeks burned with a strange unnatural glow. Now and then he shivered as though shaken by fever. He still had had no food, and no one thought of offering him any. Everyone seemed keyed to a mad pitch—away, away, before something catastrophic happened!

The car broke down four times en route so that the travelers did not reach their destination until morning. It was the King's third sleepless night. With chattering teeth, hollow-eyed and tottering, he stumbled from the car into the arms of Erdödy who, together with Colonel Lehár, had paced the street hour after hour until dawn. No one in Szombathely had been able to understand the long delay after the report had first been spread that Karl was on his way. Editor Lingauer, setting up the morning paper, had reserved a front-page column for last-

minute news, in case a misguided populace had attacked the royal party before leaving Budapest.

At sight of the King, weary but unharmed, Erdödy's eyes glistened with unavowed tears. He had spent a ghastly night of self-condemnation for his part in this comedy of errors. If Karl had met with treachery and murder at the hands of anti-royalists he, Tamás, would go down in history as the culprit of the piece. Had he not smuggled the monarch into Hungary? Had he not been guilty of unpardonable weakness when, at his home in the Landskrongasse, he had succumbed to Karl's pleas? Instead of bothering with Magyar visas he should have bundled up the King and rushed him back to Prangins as soon as possible.

As it was, Karl needed now to be bundled up and rushed to bed. Together, Erdödy and Lehár helped the King upstairs while Bishop Mikes summoned Dr. Pétö, the episcopal physician. After a hasty examination Pétö shook his head in grave alarm.

"The King is very ill," he murmured. "A case of neglected influenza, bordering on pneumonia—"

Two local colleagues, Dr. Stranz and Dr. Hauler, reviewed Pétö's diagnosis and added a further verdict.

"One lung is badly affected."

Erdödy's face was ashen. "But what are we to do? Orders are due any minute from Budapest, demanding His Majesty's departure."

The medicos shrugged their shoulders in professional detachment. "It cannot be helped," they agreed in unison. "The patient must stay in bed at least until the fever drops."

Karl stayed in bed. He lay delirious for days while Horthy telephoned that the Swiss negotiations had proved successful. The King would be admitted once again, but not to Prangins

in the Canton of Waadt; he would be assigned a more guarded place, the old Castle of Hertenstein on the shores of the vast Vierwaldstätter Lake. The representatives of the Allied Powers urged, meanwhile, that the transfer be made at once.

Bishop Mikes explained that His Majesty was semi-conscious and too ill to travel, but Horthy suspected a ruse and proposed sending his own physician to Szombathely for confirmation. At this, Bishop Mikes took offense. He vetoed any such suggestion but retaliated by inviting the government as well as the entire diplomatic corps to visit the King's sickroom.

"Perhaps it will help," snapped His Eminence into the 'phone piece, "if we can persuade the patient to spit blood!"

However, the foreign representatives were not appeased. Bombarded by code messages from their home offices, they had instructions which must be carried out regardless of the odds confronting them. Thus, with combined pressure, they prevailed upon the Regent to send a delegation of trustworthy men who could report on the case.

It was a humiliating demand, yet one which Horthy dared not refuse while Hungary was threatened by invasion. Accordingly he dispatched his Foreign Minister, Dr. Gustav Gratz, to Szombathely in the company of Count Julius Andrássy, General Hegedüs and Count Stephan Bethlen. At the same time he ordered strict censorship of the press, that no details concerning the King's whereabouts might become public. The Regent knew his fellow countrymen. He was well aware that most Magyars were monarchists at heart and that Karl would be lifted to the throne on a surge of mass-enthusiasm, once people discovered his hiding place. True, there was the inevitable grapevine system, but news propagated through such channels could always be dismissed as mere rumor or denied outright by an official

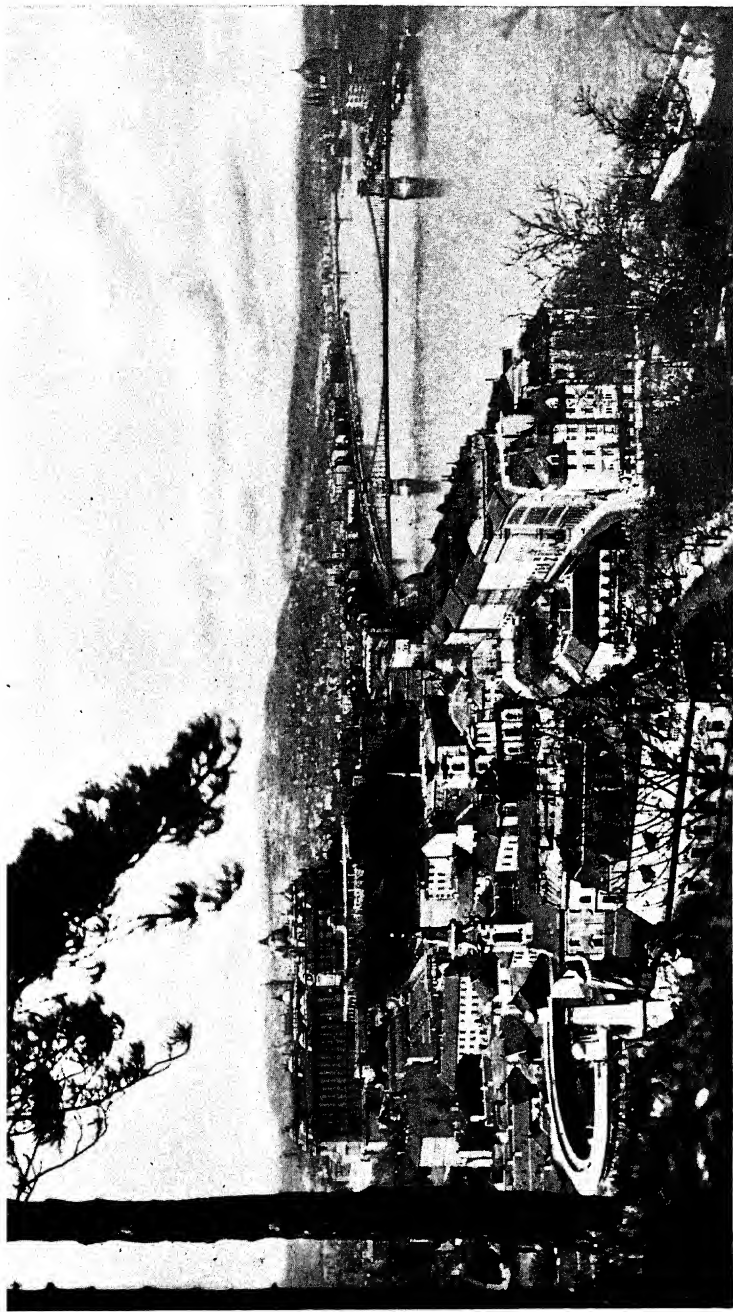


Photo Auer, Budapest.

Budapest.

(Left: Royal Palace crowning the hills of Buda. Right: Dome and spires of Parliament in Pest.)



Photo Csiky, Budapest.

Grand staircase in Royal Palace at Buda.
(Scene of Karl's long march to Horthy.)

dementi, and while this could still be done Horthy would not relent.

Throughout these events the Regent was not unaware of a profound inconsistency in his own position. A monarchist himself, he was compelled to play the rôle of foe, barring the King to whom he had been sworn by oath. But Horthy's job was the salvation of Hungary from further rape at the hands of the Entente, Big or Little, whose preachments concerning self-determination of small nations proved strictly a partisan matter. Only those countries which suited the Entente could have the governments they wanted, regardless of form; Rumania and Yugoslavia were allowed their kings, but not Hungary. The Regent's task most certainly was not an enviable one.

Censorship at home did little to discourage the foreign press. Abroad, where imaginations ran riot, the "Hapsburg Restoration" was lampooned in glaring headlines. Since pictures of Karl could not be obtained, Zita and the children were photographed in the gardens of Prangins, as they waited to be summoned by His Majesty. One snapshot of the little Archdukes appeared in London papers over the caption "Fallen Arches," while America contributed its pungent idiom by referring to the antics of adventurous "Perhapsburgs." Out of this welter of publicity one fact loomed clear: the attempt had failed and Karl's ill-fated star had passed its zenith. It would not rise again.

Zita read the news and conferred with her brothers. Together the Parma relatives held a council of war, for they were not yet through with fighting. Karl still remained in Hungary, didn't he? All was not lost so long as the King could entrench himself on Magyar soil. Accordingly some means must be devised to keep him there.

It was Sixtus who hit upon a solution. Through an American

named Mr. Fitz-Williams, who was to be disguised as a famed Boston specialist, a message of encouragement would be sent to Karl, urging the utmost resistance to expatriation. Carefully worded, the French text ran as follows:

“Earnestly beg our client to remain cool, courageous, and firm. Nothing to be feared here. The neighbors will quiet down.”

After being admitted to Szombathely on the strength of well-forged credentials, Fitz-Williams took the King's pulse and thumped the royal chest. He nodded gravely at the other doctors in eloquent approval of their therapeutic efforts and, while they basked in the stranger's glib admiration, his fingers deftly slipped the message into the King's cuff.

Through bloodshot eyes Karl read his brother-in-law's exhortations but he no longer rallied to the spell of Parma oratory. Far from calming down, Hungary's neighbors were rampant at Prague, Bucharest and Belgrade, clamoring for intervention. To save the nation and its regent further embarrassment he was prepared to withdraw.

“Let me get up,” he implored Dr. Pétö. “I am ready to go.”

Tuesday, April 5, was chosen for the King's departure. Before sunrise of that day the townsmen of Szombathely noticed that something was afoot, else how could one explain the arrival of a special train from Budapest? Servant gossip issuing from the Bishop's Palace soon cleared up the mystery, letting it be known that Karl was to be spirited away. At this a crowd of citizens marched through the streets, gathering new numbers in every block until a veritable mob stampeded under the King's windows.

"Remain! Remain!" cried a thousand throats, while flags and broad-brimmed hats were waved through the air.

Already dressed, Karl stepped out on a narrow balcony. He smiled down at the sea of faces.

"*Éljen a hazal!*" they chorused again. "*Éljen a Király!*" ("Hail to our Country! Hail to our King!")

He held out both his arms in a gesture of love and gratitude. Then, growing weak, he stepped back into his room. Dropping into an armchair he could hear the incessant cheering, interspersed with that vibrant imperative: "Remain!" Yet, though he longed to do their bidding, remain he could not.

Toward eight o'clock a deputation of country gentry arrived, led by the doyens of Hungarian nobility: Prince Bathyány, Count Jenő Szécsenyi, as well as the senior Counts of Erdödy, Sándor and George. They were dressed in the gorgeous *Magnaten* regalia with gold-embroidered sable-bordered dolmans thrown across their shoulders and jeweled shakos tilted proudly on their heads. Here, if the King but wanted it, was support—the nucleus of an army which would sweep all opposition before it. Colonel Lejár drew nearer to Karl, his fists tightly clenched.

"Speak the word, Sire," he said. "Today we cannot lose!"

Jármý and Almássy joined in Lejár's plea, as did Mikes with a slow nod of his bald cleric's head. This time the King must march on Budapest at the head of his loyal legions.

But Karl remembered Horthy's words: "Win the throne and you lose the nation . . ." No, he would not march nor shed a drop of Magyar blood. One thing alone detained him still in Hungary; he was waiting for a telegram from Budapest which gave assurance that no one connected with the royal escapade would suffer punishment. As soon as Horthy's guaranty was in his hands, the chapter was closed.

Meanwhile the crowd continued to swell until it seemed doubtful that His Majesty would be able to use the normal route to the station. By ten o'clock the demonstration had reached a tumultuous uproar and Szécsenyi urged that the King appear on the balcony once more. Karl acceded, but he realized almost at once that he would not be strong enough to resist such emotional pressure much longer; the temptation to make use of this personal triumph and to turn it into short-lived victory was too great. He must hurry to the train before the cheers of an unthinking populace turned his head.

A moment later the royal party drove through a rear portal of the Bishop's Palace and, skirting the mob, headed by devious routes to the small Szombathely station. Here, too, people stood waiting. As the King arrived a hail of flowers was strewn in his path and cries of "*Éljen*" filled the air. No, this was not a country that despised monarchic rule, Versailles and the democracies notwithstanding. . . .

Again the King accepted cheers and ovations, but he was ready to call a halt. Shaking hands with Lehár, Erdödy, Mikes and the others who had escorted him, he withdrew into the privacy of a curtained railroad car. The train, set to leave the moment His Majesty was aboard, started suddenly. Taken by surprise, Karl rushed to a window, pulled down the glass and leaned out.

"The telegram," he cried excitedly. "Stop! I must wait for a telegram—"

The siren from the engine raised its shrill voice, drowning out the King's demand. Slowly the train rolled on as Karl continued at the window, waving his arms in despair. It would never do to go without Horthy's promise. This could indeed be looked upon as cowardice, to leave Lehár, Jármy, Almássy and the faithful

Tamás footing the bill for the King's hazardous enterprise. . . . No, he must jump and run back before it was too late.

The train came briefly to a halt at the main junction on the edge of town where a double switch had to be changed. It was during this lull that Karl tried to carry out his plan. Escaping the government agents who were to escort him as far as Switzerland, he rushed down the aisle and tugged at the door of the car. It stuck—or else it was locked. He had no time to find out. Rushing back to the open window, he attempted to climb out. But even before his startled companions had jumped up to restrain him a messenger came galloping down the track, followed by several lumbering gentlemen in fluttering topcoats. Among them could be recognized Count Kánya, special commissioner for the Regent, who brandished a sheet of paper in his hand. The telegram, at last!

Quickly the King composed himself. He straightened his uniform (still bearing Erdödy's insignia) and lighted a cigarette. By the time the puffing delegates arrived to deliver their message, Karl had recovered his poise. Leaning far out the window he seized the document which bore Horthy's pledge. The King's escorts, Margrave Pallaviani, Count Hunyadi and an army doctor, Professor Wenhardt, hovered near to make certain that no plot was afoot.

Again the siren blew and black smoke belched upward as the locomotive was set in motion. Smiling his thanks to the government officials, Karl looked back into the distance and bade silent farewell to Hungary. His conscience was at rest and he did not grieve.

Arrangements had been made for the train to run as far as Jemersdorf on the border, where the King was to be taken into Austrian custody. But as the travelers neared Körmend, the last

town of greater size, it was learned that the special train sent by President Mayr of Austria had started with considerable delay. Accordingly the Hungarians proceeded across the line as far as Fehring to make the transfer.

It was after five o'clock in the afternoon (four hours behind schedule) that Karl changed cars. As he did so he observed that his suite of unwelcome attendants had been augmented by ten policemen and eight troopers, plus their lieutenants. Obviously tiny Austria, the most mercilessly pillaged member of the former Central Powers, feared Entente reprisals even more than did Hungary. President Mayr was using every precaution against possible public demonstrations in the event of Karl's transit becoming known. Heavily guarded, the ex-Emperor would have no chance to show his face.

He did, however, have ample opportunity to reflect on the fitful caprice of power. The Hapsburg Empire, once masterful and proud, was quivering now before the wrath of former vassal minorities who, having attained independence, policed its borders and stamped out all vestiges of Austrian culture in their newly gained domains. Hungarians in Slovenia, Croats in Yugoslavia, German-speaking Austrians at Prague, all faced oppression and discrimination such as formerly the Slavs had moaned about. With the true journalist's flair for graphic phrasing, an American commentator, L. H. Robbins, would one day sum up Europe's troubles: "How a minority, reaching majority, seizing authority, hates a minority! . . ." Perhaps this was, after all, the crux of international politics no less than the key to all repetitive cycles of social reform. Certainly Karl was not misled into believing that, where human nature was concerned, there could be much that was new under the sun.

By seven o'clock the train reached Graz, famed industrial

city. But the engineer followed instructions and skirted the edge of the steelwork center and passed on into the darkness of early night. Through Bruck and Kapfenberg the same procedure was followed, although in the latter town a rumor had brought crowds of workingmen to the station. But Karl did not hear their clamor, for he had cowered into a corner of his stuffy compartment and dropped off to sleep.

At dawn, after a night of jerky riding, the King arose and gazed upon a changed panorama. The flatlands had given way to glorious mountain scenery as the train chugged along through the Selzthal, past Attnag, Puchheim, Bischofshofen and Wörgl into the magic Tyrol. Six hours more of riding, another border line to cross, before Alpine horizons glowed in sunset colors and the final destination had been reached. On Wednesday evening, April 6, Karl was confronted by immigration authorities at Lucerne and led to the Hotel National where Zita and the royal children were expected at any moment. From here the journey to Hertenstein would be undertaken as soon as final preparations were completed.

Again the King smiled his thanks. In eager gulps he breathed the pure Swiss air which promised new life to his sick lung. Behind him lay the nightmare of political miscarriage; ahead lay quietude. Sick as he was, he needed quietude far more than he would ever need a crown.

CHAPTER 19

WITH a new baby in her arms Zita welcomed him back.

The child, a daughter, had been baptized Charlotte at birth. But this name was promptly Magyarized into *Sári* (Sarolta) for, despite her husband's fiasco (news of which had already circled the globe), Zita kept alive the myth of being an Hungarian queen. It was a proud obsession that would never leave her.

During Karl's absence the Prangins household had grown superlatively regal due to the fact that Zita was once more in possession of a lady-in-waiting. Agnes Schönborn, former court attendant, had volunteered her services during the Queen's confinement. With approval of the Swiss authorities the faithful Countess had installed herself at the royal retreat, where, without visible remuneration, she performed the tasks of nursemaid, governess and general factotum. This buoyed up Zita's spirits immeasurably; with but a single attendant a queen could feel more queenly while eating carrots from a table that boasted a patched cotton cloth.

At Castle Hertenstein, a chill, deserted fort where the rigors of exile would grow still more acute, Countess Schönborn's presence proved no less a boon. The King's recent failure in Hungary had cast a pall over the family circle, but the resourceful Agnes strove to dispell the gloom by gathering the children for improvised concerts, charades or guessing games. While keeping their elders amused the little ones were thus made conscious of a hidden sorrow that seemed to lurk forever in their midst. Quite early they developed a sense of maladjustment and

a haunting nostalgia for scenes their ears rather than their eyes remembered. At night, lying awake on their small cots, the youngsters listened in awe to the disconsolate conversations between King and Queen. Presently Otto and his brothers spoke solemnly of a "homelessness" they did not understand, and of their own sacred obligation to protect Papa and Mama against a wicked world. In short, grief itself served to knit the family more closely together.

After the gates of Hertenstein had closed behind him, Karl's attitude became one of utter resignation. Zita was not in accord with this. A man, she argued, must never admit himself beaten. What was more, a Hapsburg could not afford to brand himself as an amateur or a dilettante king. The bluest of blue blood exacted from him a belief in his mission and a determination to walk through fire for the attainment of his goal.

But Hertenstein offered no convenient blaze to walk through. The only promenade in sight was a short avenue of trees that led to the guarded ramparts and back; beyond these limits the captive monarch was not allowed to go. Strict orders had been issued forbidding anyone to leave the premises, even for a stroll through the forlorn gardens, except with an armed escort. In addition, the King had been asked for his pledge—in writing—that he would hereafter desist from all political scheming while on Swiss soil. This included his renunciation of further contact with the brothers of the Queen.

Ailing and tired, Karl willingly complied. He did not find it despicable to cast aside ambition and to settle down into a peaceful routine of country life. With Zita and the children at his side the world seemed well worth losing. He was determined to find Hertenstein agreeable, even homelike, if he must perforce be an outcast from his native heath.

But exile held no charms for Zita. Congenitally restless, she could not now bow to the added restrictions of their new abode. Nor would she recognize the commitments made by her husband with regard to political intrigue. As long as Parma blood flowed through her veins Zita would plot. She would hatch fresh schemes, even as she bore new descendants to the Hapsburg stirps, until God and Nature failed her.

In the presence of her strength Karl grew appalled at his own weakness. He strove to cover up his disillusionings and to make light of the malady that already gripped him. As far as Zita knew he suffered only from a deep protracted cold, which her expert attention would banish without much ado. But in reality the monarch was marked for early doom.

Lovingly Zita nursed and pampered him, giving of the full bounty that was in her heart. But while she seemed to be all wife, all helpmate, her mind detached itself from physical ministrations and rose aloft to eye him with cold appraisal. Had he done all there was to do on his abortive journey to Budapest? What was it that went wrong? Perhaps matters might have taken a different turn—there would have been success instead of failure—if she, Zita, had gone along. . . . But no, she must banish such thoughts; they cast a reflection upon Karl, as though he had been guilty of incompetence. She must redouble her tenderness and keep him from suspecting what she suspected, namely that he lacked self-assertion. Yes, that was it exactly! He could not hold his ground. And she, Zita, could.

Her realization of this simple truth grew daily more intense until it became an obsession. Soon other interests retreated before the single question which began tormenting her through every waking hour. Could a second attempt be made? Was there another chance? If so, she would take part this time and

stand at the King's side when he faced Horthy again. She would let that sailor know what manner of woman was the Queen.

But how and when could this be done? In vain she scribbled seemingly innocuous postcards (letters were forbidden) to her brothers, employing a clever code they had devised at the time of the *Affaire Sixtus*. But either these missives never reached their destination or someone intercepted the ostensibly harmless replies.

Both conjectures proved true. During routine inspection of the Hertenstein mail, Swiss authorities found the postcard traffic more lively than was warranted by the vapid messages it conveyed. Only one explanation seemed acceptable; the actual text was not as inconsequential as it purported to be. Unable to get to the bottom of the matter, the irritated Helvetians decided to make short shrift of the royal problem by rolling up the welcome mat and giving notice to the Hapsburg guests that all visitors' permits expired at the end of six months—October, 1921, to be exact. The Entente would have to find another castle in another land for the troublesome exiles who plainly did not value a good thing when they had it.

Karl was puzzled and dismayed at this sudden development. Unaware of its underlying cause, he sent an appeal to the Federal Assembly at Berne, laying bare the truth about his illness and pleading for extension of the permit. But there was no reply. Frantically he turned next to the Allied Commission, asking for asylum in England, Sweden or Spain. However, each of these countries had enough to do with homeless refugees from war-torn areas, without adding the ballast of a royal family. In the end he repeated his request to the Swiss Government, this time in the most abject terms, and was granted a period of grace up to January of 1922.

Zita did not regard this extension as a boon, for at the first suggestion of expulsion from Swiss territory she had put on her thinking cap and had emerged with a stupendous plan. Two Hungarian army fliers, Captains Fekete and Alexy, had made contact some months ago with her lady-in-waiting, Countess Schönborn. In bold terms they had proposed chartering a discarded Junkers plane and putting it in shape for a surprise flight to Budapest. But at that time Karl had rejected the idea as too dangerous and Zita herself had shuddered at the notion of leaving the ground.

"Die Luft hat keine Balken," she had warned, quoting a well-known platitude. ("The air has no props.")

Today she thought differently. Through the Countess she now notified Fekete that his scheme had been reconsidered and found practicable. Let him obtain a safe machine; as for persuading the King, Zita would handle this part of the problem without fail.

She approached Karl during his noon siesta on the eastern parapet. With glowing words she drew for him a picture of her mad cabal.

The King listened, a smile of gentle amusement on his lips. "Fekete will need money," he said while she paused for breath. "Where do you plan to get this money?"

Zita was undaunted. "I have jewels. Fat bankers' wives pay a good price for pieces they will never have the courage to wear."

He still took it as a joke. "And what is to happen to you and the children? That is, while I turn aviator—" He broke into a laugh at the preposterousness of such a thought.

"Oh," she cried, "Agnes promises to look after the children. And as for me—"

"Yes?"

"I am going with you."

He had been lying on a chaise longue with his face turned to the sun. But at these words he shot up to his feet.

"Zita, this is impossible—it's insane!"

She did not think so. Alexy was already reserving a cabin ship with the Ad Astra Aeroplan Kompanie at Dübendorf. Moreover, since the two officers had gained their flying experience in wretched Austrian machines, it was deemed advisable to secure a first-rate German pilot (Europe was at the moment overrun with experts out of work). A certain Captain von Zimmermann had already applied for the job.

"But how do you expect to leave this house?" the King asked with a trace of impatience. "They won't even let Otto sail his paper boats out on the lake!"

Zita had thought of this too. During October she and Karl were due to celebrate the tenth anniversary of their marriage. Surely the local burgomaster would find it in his heart to grant them a short outing in honor of this day? He not only would; he already had. For, as soon as its potentialities became clear to her, Zita had lost no time in bringing this sentimental topic to the burgomaster's attention.

Karl felt himself caught in a maze of plot and counterplot. "We still need a new set of passports," he groaned. "Our own names would never do. Did you realize that?"

She nodded. Alexy was at work also on the passports. Zita looked Russian, Alexy had decided, so the papers must be made out in Russian; the King and Queen would travel as a nice middle-class couple named Kovno.

This seemed to cover the matter. Karl's resistance was slowly crumbling as the remaining details fell flawlessly into place. The

stage was set and the curtain could go up. But one small factor now delayed the show, the element of time. April had just drawn to a close and a whole tedious summer must yet be endured before the anniversary month drew near. The hotly forged plans were laid temporarily on ice.

Slowly the seasons changed while the monotony of life at Hertenstein remained unbroken. Lest he lose heart Zita enfolded Karl with constant attention. Her tenderness redoubled so that, if doubts beset her own agonized mind, her spirit drew new strength from this ardor. But it was Nature who profited most fully through the emotional tension of this period, for, long before the time appointed for flight, Zita was again pregnant.

Never until now had her fecundity annoyed her. Well aware of modern civilization's dearth of fruitful women, she bore her motherhood with pride. But there ought to be a limit even to such bounty; Nature could have afforded an omission when there was so much Zita had to do.

Briefly the Queen was overcome by panic. Must she give up the Budapest venture? Was she not courting certain death in subjecting herself and the unborn life within her to the rigors of air travel? She had no idea of her body's reaction to extreme altitude, or, for that matter, of Karl's. Perhaps Fate had permitted the obstacle of a pregnancy to arise in order to prevent the journey altogether?

But no, this could not be. She would not have it! Nothing had ever frightened her before and she would let nothing frighten her now. She would not even tell her husband how things stood with her, lest his faint courage fail him altogether. By means of deft tucks and draperies she could conceal her slowly changing figure, explaining that economy caused her to wear such loose unstylish clothes. Karl had implicit faith

in what she said; he would not be tactless enough to pursue the subject further.

Thus she was able to keep her counsel until the heat of summer passed and autumn leaves lay scattered on the ground.

Early in October the prearranged signal from Fekete arrived, fixing the nineteenth as the date of departure. The King and Queen arose before dawn of the appointed day and donned heavy travel accoutrements designed to protect as well as to disguise. They breakfasted in silence while listening for the hackney cab which the burgomaster himself had chartered for their "anniversary trip." Once, during the anxious wait, Zita was tempted to slip back into the nursery for a last glance at the sleeping children, but she conquered the impulse by sheer power of will. Let them remain unaware as long as possible. By the time the truth leaked out and the royal couple's escape was discovered, Karl and Zita would be enthroned in their own capital, supreme once more. It would be a simple matter then to summon Agnes with the little ones.

The cab arrived, paused briefly for its load and jogged away again at a merry trot. Behind partially drawn curtains the King peered through the morning mist and coughed. He coughed a great deal nowadays, thought Zita, but Hungary would change all that. The sun-baked *Hortobágy*, the Great Plain, would receive him in its thermal embrace and would heal whatever plagued him. Then there was the fine goats' milk from the puszta, excellent for anemia; Karl's cheeks were quite pink, of course, but she nevertheless could have sworn that he suffered from anemia. Yes, Hungary would make him well again.

Amid such speculations the drive to Dübendorf passed. Leaving their cab at a small tavern, the King and Queen asked

for a room in which to tidy up. A moment later, while the driver was occupied watering his horses, the travelers emerged through a rear door and set out for a stroll.

It was quite a walk. In fact, it led straight through the town, past the quaint market place and toward the airport that lay two miles beyond. Here Fekete, Alexy and von Zimmermann were already waiting. Beside the main hangar stood the ship, a metal low-winged monoplane characteristic of the German Lufthansa. The log specified Geneva as the craft's destination, a fact which Fekete now whispered to the King and Queen, lest they drop all caution at the moment of embarkation and reveal their true goal. But these fears proved needless, since the royal pair was mindful of its cues. After a routine passport inspection the airdrome officials declared themselves satisfied. They wished Monsieur and Madame Kovno a safe journey and turned to earnest perusal of their weather charts.

Only a student pilot ambling across the field observed the takeoff and shook his head. He was not puzzled by the Swiss flag painted on a Junkers motor or at the wing identification of "C. H. 59." Having been forbidden to fly her own planes, Germany was selling them at bargain prices to every customer in Europe. But the machine up there was supposed to be bound for Geneva, or so it had been registered. Well, at the rate it thrashed against the wind and pointed its nose due east, the unsuspecting passengers would reach Geneva via Singapore. Veteran pilots, the student flier told himself, were capable of blunders for which a mere recruit in aeronautics would be tarred and feathered.

Aloft the King and Queen cowered side by side, strapped to the cramped leather seat. Blood pounded in their ears and throats, but they acquitted themselves bravely and made no use



Photo Korthy, Vienna.

The Emperor-King and his family in exile at Hertenstein, Switzerland.



Photo Koller Tanár, Budapest.

Julius Gömbös, head of the Honvéd Ministry.

of either cotton or smelling salts which beckoned from a pocket on the cabin wall. Disdainfully Zita crumpled the paper receptacle at her feet, so firmly was her mind made up that she would not be nauseated. But, lest her fortitude break down and she must ignominiously stoop to retrieve the scorned vessel, she kept a furtive eye cocked in its direction. For the rest, the Queen sat serenely unruffled. Occasionally she ventured to peep out at the vanishing world below, but mostly her gaze rested with a strange intensity on the flat expanse of Captain von Zimmermann's skull. This broad taciturn man, she realized, ruled her destiny and the fate of all whom she held dear. Watching him at the controls she prayed silently, fiercely, to a special aeronautic God who must quiet the wind and part the clouds for this small human cargo to reach port.

Her prayers were heeded. Through golden autumn sunshine the craft flew steadily like a giant bird across Middle Europe. Below lay the patchwork pattern of the Continent, gaudy as a picture book, with glittering lakes and green pine forests punctuated by the jaunty geranium red of tiled house tops. In Germany the farmed land was divided neatly into squares of chessboard regularity, with spired towns and villages breaking up the geometric design. But soon the panorama changed as, without taking cognizance of having crossed a border line, the plane skirted Bavaria's mountain passes and swooped over Austria. There lay the Salzkammergut, its Mozart City of Salzburg nestling about the mighty fortress on the rock. Here the feudal system had survived far into modern times so that the rural landscape differed from that of Germany. No prim chessboard partitioning of Austrian soil, but long narrow fields running in parallel strips toward the manorial estates of a local squire, count or duke, whose lands had been tilled from time

immemorial on a share basis by peasants who lived round about.

Slightly southward lay the snowy Semmering with its resort hotels and winter playgrounds now bare and desolate through years of neglect. Somewhere beyond that deep carpet of firs lay the hunting lodges of Reichenau where Zita had spent happy months during her early married life. She pressed against the window now to spy the well-loved scenes, but distance threw a veil of mist across her eyes, so that she saw only what was graven on the retina of memory.

That long expanse of white and gold with hues of verdigris was Vienna. Schönbrunn must be over there, to the right, buried in dreams. Did the old palace with its terraces and fountains feel a nostalgic quiver as the Emperor and Empress flew overhead?

"Descend!" Zita cried suddenly. "Oh, let me see Schönbrunn—"

The metal bird sank several hundred meters until a crisscross of lines could be distinguished as intersecting streets. The Hapsburg coat of arms, etched in bright majolica tiles across the steep roof of the Stefansdom, flashed a proud greeting to the bearers of that name. Even Karl was roused from lethargy at sight of the magnificent cathedral which embodied Hapsburg's past. No matter if a world crashed about his ears, or if that imperial crest and the church itself were blotted out, something imperishable would remain. The very name of Hapsburg carried a ring that would go down in history and cause men to look up, involuntarily, wherever it might be pronounced. Enemies of dynastic tradition would turn for a second awed glance at a bricklayer or headwaiter in whose veins flowed this blood. Mankind itself could not explain why this was so, but mankind proved it—regardless of all rabid verbiage to the contrary—by its actions in the presence of even fallen royalty.

Wiener-Neustadt and its airport glided past, sending a shiver down Fekete's and Alexy's spines. Here, during the War, Austria's flower of manhood had crashed to earth in defective planes sold by criminal profiteers who made a business of death. In the near-by morass of Fischamend piles of junked wreckage filled the burial ground of Franz Joseph's air fleet.

Off to the left, the travelers could see a field of chalk-white dots; the *Zentralfriedhof*, Vienna's most popular cemetery. Its tombstones with their Philistine inscriptions were a monument to middle-class conceit, disproving the old adage that in death all men are equal. Here were recorded the names of men and their professions, quite as though the city of departed souls required a passport for admission. How often, on furtive visits, members of the former court had deciphered some of the extraordinary epitaphs, which so belied the democratic preachments of a class-conscious *bourgeoisie*. The King and Queen smiled now in recollection, as Karl recited:

"Marie Umpfinger,
Klaviertransporteursgattin."
("Piano-mover's-spouse.")

Laughing heartily, Zita recalled the equally pompous rubric:

"Anselm Gmund,
Rauchfangkehrersgehilfe."
("Chimney-sweep-assistant.")

But not all the denizens of Vienna's principal graveyard proclaimed their earthly rank with such unvarnished ostentation. There was also a simple marker bearing the lone word *Beethoven*—and nothing else. . . .

Again the plane soared upward, nosing toward Hungary.

Now the mighty Danube governed the panorama with its enormous curvatures and byways. A very old river it must be, to have become so vast and meandering in its course; young rivers gushed straight to their destination, but the Danube had sprawled widely over the lands she traversed, following a broad and twisted path to the Black Sea.

"Look—" Zita exclaimed. "No wonder the boat trip always seemed so slow!"

She was right. The legendary stream appeared to be going everywhere except where it was going.

Again there was no line of demarcation, but the travelers knew that what now lay beneath them must be Hungary. Austria's snow-capped Alps and her baronial castles of Gothic or Baroque design had given way to harvest-yellow topography. The high Tatra ranges still flanked the north, but in the far distance gleamed the first traces of the puszta, that flat cattle land reminiscent of the Siberian steppe, the Argentine pampa or the Dakotan prairie. Here lay the rolling corn and wheat fields once known as the Empire's granary, the treasure chest of the Danubian valley. Torn up today as war booty, these acres had once fed not the Dual Monarchy alone but the whole German nation during three winters of blockade.

Late afternoon was falling and the shimmering fields reflected a burnished glow as from a dozen setting suns. Twice Captain von Zimmerman pointed to a fantastic vision of trees, cupolas and turrets. "Budapest?" he queried, aware that the plane was overdue and slightly off its course. But as Fekete nodded and the motors slowed for a quick descent the picture vanished and disclosed itself as a mirage.

Soon Zita felt that something was wrong. Months ago Fekete had been in contact with Colonel Lehar in Hungary. It had

been arranged that a party of scouts would await the royal plane beyond the city limits, marking a safe landing place by means of flares. Without such advance precautions the King and Queen would have been compelled to risk arrival at an airport policed by Entente agents. This would mean instant arrest and a possible court-martial.

As dusk approached no flares could yet be seen. The sudden, almost tropic night, following a brief pause of twilight, was no more helpful than the blinding afternoon haze. But gradually, here and there, lights began to glow in village streets while urban centers proclaimed their size in bolder electric incandescence.

Tensely the travelers clung to their straps while with searching eyes they peered at the jeweled darkness below. The world seemed to have been inverted, with the nocturnal velvet of the sky and the dancing glitter of the stars arrayed where formerly the earth had been. But from that fallen firmament not one familiar constellation met their gaze.

"Our fuel supply is low," von Zimmerman informed his co-pilot. "What do you say—shall we try a forced landing?"

Fekete paled and signaled Alexy, who crouched in the rear of the ship. Alexy shrugged quiescent shoulders, as though resigned to any fate. Since plans had gone awry, he concurred, they might as well crash here as on the Mátyásföld in Budapest.

"Down," Fekete signaled the pilot. "There's nothing else to do."

A few more seconds of aimless cruising and then the plane shot downward for a steady drop of twelve hundred meters. But now, while coasting through murky shadows, the travelers were able to discern far in the distance a flickering tongue of flame.

"The flare," Alexy cried out hoarsely, "that's Lehár's flare!"

A burning patch of ground came into view. Against its glare the tall arm of a puszta well and waterpump was silhouetted in grotesque relief, looking like a black finger that pointed toward the sky.

The plane made a perilous landing. And now Fekete, who was the first to leap out, discovered that the smoldering conflagration was not a friendly signal but simply a "potato fire" held at this time of year for the clearing of dry stubble prior to new planting. Peasants in dusty working clothes were gathered near by in small clusters, led by a village elder with a *kukoricza pipa* (corncob pipe).

"What place is this?" Captain Fekete asked the old man.

"A part of *Pusztá Család*," came the wary answer. These people, one could see, had known Italian air raids during the War. They did not welcome the ominous bird that had descended from the clouds.

Fekete tried to remember the grazing lands named by the graybeard. Was not Család a part of Dénesfa, the estate of the Cziráky family? Yes, the two places were associated in his mind. He must obtain some gig or carriage to make the overland journey to the manor house.

On hearing this request the patriarch turned and consulted his flock. Then he shook his head emphatically. No coach for hire and no horses. Everyone was tired after a hard day's work, too, so the strangers need not ask for a guide. Besides, the road to Dénesfa was riddled with shellholes and had not been used in years; it ran right through yonder wood and lost itself in a bog.

Finding themselves checkmated on the ground, the fliers had no choice but to attempt another ascent. Fekete waved apologetically to the King, who had just lighted a cigarette.

Promptly cigarette and match went out the window as the royal passengers composed themselves for the second takeoff. To the screech of terrified peasant wenches Alexy swung the propeller and leaped back to his seat before the silvery craft bounced over the field. As it soared upward its landing gear barely skimmed the crackling fringe of *Pusztá Család's* "potato fire."

CHAPTER 20

WHEN NEXT the giant bird came down to earth it chose a meadow for its landing. Compass in hand, Fekete had been able to calculate the way to Dénesfa within a stone's throw of the lordly manor.

The Counts of Cziráky, Jozsi and Gyuri were country gentlemen with a flair for farming. Their estates (Gyuri's place was at Kenyeri, six kilometers away) abounded in livestock, agricultural implements, hunting trophies and tenant workers with swarms of children. It so happened that the plane bearing the King and Queen came actually to rest almost atop Count Jozsi's favorite threshing machine. The blast from the propeller all but made off with a near-by stack of hay.

As the travelers climbed out of their cramped cabin and stretched legs numbed by hours of sitting, Zita felt on the verge of collapse. The quick descent, following so soon after the forced puszta landing, had not gone well with her stomach. The blood pounded in her ears as she leaned against the side of the plane, listening to the wild throb of her heart. To stop fighting now, to break down and be deathly ill—just once—what a relief it would be! But no, she must not let herself go. She dared not weaken at a time when no one else showed strength.

Beyond the manor gates, meanwhile, all Dénesfa had come to life. Dogs barked, cows mooed and children whooped as man and beast stampeded toward the threshing field, agog with wonderment. Though the reflection of courtyard lights

pierced the darkness, no one recognized any of the royal party.

Again Fekete was the first to speak. While ascertaining whether this might be the Cziráky property he learned not only that it was, but that Count Jozsi had just celebrated the baptism of his youngest son. The house was full of guests, among them Bishop Mikes from Szombathely, as well as Count Gyuri Cziráky, Count Jozsef Károlyi, Count Julius Andrássy and their wives.

"Shall we go in?" Fekete asked the King.

Karl shook his head. Aiding the Queen, who was deathly pale and hardly able to walk, he sought the shelter of a road shrine on the edge of the field. Then he turned to one of the manor servants.

"Ask your master to come here." It was the tone of royalty speaking.

Unconsciously the man stood at attention. "Yes, sir."

He hurried away, with Fekete at his heels. A few minutes later the Count and Countess in full evening finery came running down the road, the officer between them. Fekete had obviously explained the travelers' identities with the admonition that the utmost secrecy was advisable, since Budapest must not be given time to arm against the King. Accordingly Count Jozsi greeted Karl with a casual handshake, though his wife could not refrain from curtsying to the Queen.

"Back to your quarters!" Cziráky then shouted to the gaping throng. "There's plenty of Tókey tonight for everybody—let old Bandi here fetch you another cask, while I look after these latecomers myself."

With this he seized a white-shirted *csikós* (cowherd) by the scruff of the neck and jovially shooed him homeward. The ancient retainer raised a lusty warcry and trotted on, his wide

sleeves and pantaloons flying. Slowly the crowd dispersed and followed after him, as Cziráky turned to the King.

"Your Majesty, this is a terrible mistake!"

Karl seemed weary. He had met with this kind of reception before. Almost automatically he could repeat the dialogue of six months ago.

"You are not glad to see me?" he asked dully.

"Personally," Cziráky protested, "I am most happy indeed! But, Your Majesty, Bethlen is Premier now—"

So that was it. Teleky had been forced out of office, perhaps because his car broke down along the Szombathely highway before he could warn Budapest of the royalist coup. Now Horthy's government was bolstered by Bethlen, a man approved by the Entente and doubtless coached from Belgrade and Prague.

"This is not all," Cziráky broke in on the King's musings. "Gömbös, head of the Honvéd Ministry, has openly declared himself anti-legitimist. He will fight Your Majesty at every step."

Ah, Gömbös, the horseman, took enemy dictation too! Bow-legged Gyula, as he was known, did not intend to champion a lost cause.

It was at this point that Countess Cziráky urged the travelers to come inside. With a woman's experienced eye she had already grasped the Queen's secret: four or five months pregnant, would have been her guess. Of course one must allow for frills and dirndl skirt. . . .

Count Jozsi vetoed his wife's hospitable offer. With her own father, Julius Andrássy, among the guests, it would be impossible to preserve the King's incognito. Andrássy had been Foreign Minister at the time of the Sixtus Affair, and he was

royalist to the core. But only two days ago he had promised Bethlen in open Parliament that no attempt at a restoration would take place until Hungary was ready for it. Andrásy's very presence at Dénesfa tonight might be interpreted as treason, since no one would believe that his grandson's christening and the clandestine arrival of Their Majesties could be mere coincidence.

It was a shocking thing to shut one's door in a king's face. But there was nothing else to do.

"Perhaps—" Cziráky faltered, "it would please Your Majesties to spend the night in my brother Gyuri's house at Kenyeri? It is not far from here."

To his relief Karl and Zita were instantly agreeable. They begged to be given a carriage and shown the way. While the Countess rushed into the manor to inform her brother-in-law that he had just acquired house guests who must be conveyed at once to Kenyeri, the King pointed to his Junkers on the field.

"The bird," he asked, "can it be left here?"

Count Jozsi nodded. "Absolutely. My men will see that no one pulls a feather from its tail."

A moment later his brother came outside, aglow with punch-bowl mellowness. As the Kenyeri barouche drove up for the King, Count Gyuri made a felicitous speech.

"Sire," he said, "we are honored that it is Cziráky earth on which you first set foot in Hungary!"

The Queen, silent until now, looked up. A radiant smile lighted her ashen face. She could have kissed the articulate Gyuri for those words; it seemed to her that as long as she lived she would never forget them.

Without assistance, for her former ligheness had suddenly returned, the Queen stepped into the waiting vehicle. Karl took

his place beside her while opposite, squeezed into a collapsible seat, rode the genial master of Kenyeri. Fekete and his two companions remained behind to guard the plane.

No sooner had the clop-clop of horses' hoofs died in the distance than a motorcar approached from the direction of Budapest. With screeching brakes it drew up in the courtyard and a square-shouldered officer leaped to the ground. It was Colonel Lehár.

"We saw a ship come down in this vicinity," he began with caution, "I wondered—er—whether there was an accident?"

Fekete stepped forward out of the darkness and the two men eyed each other in silent recognition.

"There *might* have been an accident," the Captain spoke at last. "We saw no flares—"

"I lighted them," Colonel Lehár protested. "But the atmosphere is heavy tonight, beating down the smoke and choking our torches. The only thing that will blaze in weather like this is a rich man's barn."

"Or a poor man's potato patch," Fekete mocked.

But Lehár was too concerned about the King and Queen to take issue with his friend. "Where are Their Majesties?" he demanded.

"At the hunting lodge of Kenyeri."

"For the night? That is too dangerous. Kenyeri touches the main highway—"

Fekete paled. Lehár might be right; Count Gyuri was known round about the countryside as a host whose door was never locked. Even now, unexpected callers might have recognized the King and telephoned their knowledge to Budapest.

"What are we to do?" he asked in alarm.

Lehár was already at the wheel of his car. "Jump in," he

shouted. We must take them to Sopron where my troops are waiting." Waving to Count Jozsi and his wife, who had stood by in perplexed silence, the two men dashed through the gates.

They reached Kenyeri in less than fifteen minutes, despite darkness and wretched farm roads. As the purring motor turned into the avenue of trees that led up to the lodge a light could be seen gleaming behind ground-floor shutters. Stopping the car, Lehár crept toward a window and raised himself on his toes to peer in. He beheld a touching scene. At a table in the vast trophy room sat the Queen, a tray of tea things before her. Yet, instead of drinking, she was warming her hands on the polished samovar, while near by, Gyuri and His Majesty, down on all fours, strove valiantly to build a fire in the hearth.

Fekete had stepped up behind Lehár. "Look at her," he whispered, pointing to Zita, "how tired she is! She thinks we don't know about her condition. To please her even *he* has been pretending—"

Lehár gasped. "That's impossible! It might be her death—"

The other paused before answering. "In her vocabulary," he said at last, "the word *impossible* does not exist."

Without knocking Lehár pressed down the latch on the front door. Just as he had predicted, the place was open, unguarded, without lock or key. What unpardonable recklessness! Single-handed, a traitor could come upon the King and Queen and dispatch them in their sleep, while no one for miles around took notice. The staunch soldier's heart was outraged. Lehár did not stop for ceremony but stalked directly into the monarch's presence.

"Your Majesty," he burst out savagely, "I must insist upon immediate departure!"

Karl drew his blond head from the chimney, ashes and soot

covering his face. He shook himself like a wet poodle before jumping to his feet and greeting the officer.

"Anton, old fellow—how decent of you to come! But tell me, what happened to your signals?"

Lehár embraced the King as one would a loved son. But he was obviously loath to waste time with explanations. "This place is unsafe," he urged. "We must hurry to Sopron."

Instantly the Queen rose from her chair. She had not tasted a drop of the tea, but she was ready to go. They must not blunder. It would never do to be taken prisoner so near their goal. Regardless of her exhaustion she drew herself erect and followed Lehár from the room.

"But why Sopron?" Karl wanted to know. "We are losing time, backtracking to the border."

The Colonel's answer carried weight. "For reasons of strategy, Your Majesty. At Sopron we can flag the Budapest express and put our troops aboard—my regiment, Major von Ostenburg's battalion and the cavalry of Field Marshal Hegedüs."

A sparkle came to Zita's eyes. "You are right, Anton," she approved, unconsciously reiterating the words that had been spoken in April, "a king must come with an army."

Karl bowed to that which he had never wanted to do. He pledged himself to take the soldier's way.

The night went by with driving. Between Kenyeri and a forsaken outpost called Sajtos-Kál the Queen dropped into heavy slumber, her chiseled face relaxed, the firm chin drooping with fatigue. Karl studied her with anxious eyes.

"She is amazing," he confided to his companions. "No other woman in her state would do this thing. She has an iron will...."

It was long after midnight when the car left Sajtos-Kál,

arriving at Sopron toward dawn. Rooms had been prepared at the Hotel Pannonia, but Karl and Zita preferred to be quartered in the barracks. Hastily two army cots and blankets were put in readiness so that the royal pair might snatch a few hours of sleep before taking up the last and most critical portion of the journey. But rest was denied the travelers, for in the course of the following morning news of the King's arrival spread through the town. Shops, schools and public buildings, just opened, closed again as young and old rushed to the barracks for a glimpse of the sovereigns. Singing deputations filed through the streets in native dress, while children carried armloads of dahlias, asters and chrysanthemums (grown for the approaching feast of All Saints and All Souls) to strew them at the Queen's feet. It was a courageous demonstration of popular enthusiasm which, because of its spontaneity, led to dire consequences. In the flush of general excitement it had been forgotten that several Entente commissioners were stationed in the town. As soon as Ostenburg and Lehár realized this they ordered all outgoing mail to be seized, while telephone and telegraph wires were immediately cut. But it was impossible to restrain the commissioners from skipping across the border into Austrian or Czech territory whence they were able to make contact with the outside world.

Speed was now the most urgent factor in the King's maneuvers. With the utmost haste the entire troop contingent must be loaded on the freight train which ran through Sopron that afternoon for Budapest. Several empty cars standing on a siding had already been equipped for kitchen and hospital duty in case of some mishap en route. One of these, reeking of carbolic acid, was taken over by the King and Queen.

In the midst of these preparations faithful royalists joined the

cause from the outlying districts; they arrived by carriage or on horseback, ready to take up arms for the Crown. First among these was Count Andrassy, who had spent a wretched night of self-reproach, before setting out for Sopron at sunrise. With Andrassy was his wife, competent and determined to do service as waiting woman to the Queen. Others who came bore names of equal renown: Stefan von Rakovszky, Dr. Gustav Gratz, Baron Szterényi, Edmund Beniczky, as well as the notorious socialist Karl Payer. Delighted at this rally of followers, most of whom had held prominent offices in the vanished Hapsburg realm, Karl made up a provisional cabinet and ministry, to be presided over by Rakovszky. While conferring portfolios he also rewarded Colonel Lehár with a well-deserved promotion to the rank of general. To be sure, all these blessings were purely euphemistic, bequeathed from the primitive platform of a freight car and amid the trying effluvium of carbolic acid fumes. The new cabinet members carried no brief case, and Anton Lehár continued wearing a colonel's uniform, but conversationally the advancement was immediately put into effect. Each of the "promoted" gentlemen addressed every other according to his new rank.

By evening the last trooper had finally been stuffed into the overloaded train. A whistle blew and the stationmaster gave the signal for departure. Billows of smoke rose from the little engine as a gentle preliminary jerk went through the long chain of cars, but not a wheel moved from its place.

"*Bon Dieu!*" exclaimed Zita, falling into the familiar speech of her Franco-Italian kin. "What is it now?"

More smoke, signals and outcries, before the stationmaster came running to the royal car. The train, it appeared, was too heavy for the tiny engine.

"But it ran before this," protested Their Majesties. "It had been on its way to Budapest, had it not?"

To be sure, so it had. But ammunition and human cargo, plus the added Sopron cars, proved more than the locomotive could draw. There was only one thing to do: break up the load by leaving several cars behind, or send to the next town for another engine.

Karl took up the matter with his "ministers" and came to a quick decision. Let the troops move ahead with as many cars as could get under way, while the remaining convoy waited for relief. Meanwhile the royal party would once more go to bed and try to capture forty winks.

CHAPTER 21

TOWARD two o'clock in the morning the Queen awoke. She had trouble recognizing her surroundings until the medicinal odors expelled by her mattress brought back reality. The cot she lay on had been part of a wartime hospital unit. Her thoughts co-ordinated quickly: she was on a train now, nearing Budapest, nearing victory and restoration to a throne. . . . But no, she did not seem to be nearing anything, for there was no motion. The train stood still.

Softly the Queen rose and pushed back the curtain from a grimy opening in the opposite wall. A dim light glowed outside. She saw two gendarmes walking up and down in front of a small station the name of which she could not at first decipher. But as her eyes grew accustomed to the pallid light she read the word Sopron. Heavens! The train had not moved at all! Was something wrong? Had they been caught in a trap?

She went over to her husband's bed to rouse him. "Wake up, Károly, we are in trouble!" (Even in a crisis her disciplined mind did not forget to Magyarize the name.)

He stirred drowsily and was seized with a fit of coughing, so that she regretted instantly having disturbed him. He was so desperately in need of rest. But on the other hand, if they were surrounded by traitors, she could not allow him to continue in the false security of sleep. Sopron must not become another Ekaterinburg.

"Hurry," she whispered, smoothing out the clothes she had

not taken off since Switzerland, "we must try to slip out and get away."

He seemed bewildered. Between coughing spells he shook his head in answer to her pleas. There was nothing wrong, he murmured. After all, this was Hungary, where trains had never been on time and where, since the War, matters had become only a little worse. They must have patience.

She felt her nerves crisp and grow taut. Ah, if she were only a man, able to have her say in this whole miserable muddle! If she had worn the trousers from the start, marshaling Lehár's and Ostenburg's troops under her banner (even as far back as last April) the march on Budapest would have been history by now. Not Karl, but his enemies would be sitting in stinking railway carriages and freight vans, headed for exile.

Grimly she cowered in the dark, listening to the sounds of night. The King dropped off again to sleep, though he did not commit the ultimate indignity of snoring. That—Zita felt—would have been the crowning vexation.

She sat alone, her eyes fixed on the scarcely visible face of the station clock. Two hours passed. At last, shortly after four o'clock had struck, a jolt went through the cars and the train was slowly set in motion. In the pale dawn the houses of Sopron faded away.

Exhausted, the Queen fell back on her cot and closed her eyes. She did not open them again until almost noon, as the royal convoy caught up with the troop train just outside Raab on the Danube. It was the noise of the soldier's mess, being dispensed alongside the track, which finally wakened her. The King stood among his troops eating a bowl of soup.

"Another stop!" she cried to him, perplexed. "Where are we?"

He rushed to her side with good news. The whole fortress of

Raab was monarchist in sentiment. Schools had declared a holiday and the entire citizenry waited across the river to greet the royal train with an ovation. Even now two rival bands could be heard playing the national anthem.

"Our troubles are over," was the King's elated conclusion. "It will be child's play from here on."

At sight of his optimism she took heart. But almost while he was talking the good news changed to bad. A messenger galloped across the bridge waving a telegram in his outstretched hand. It was from Budapest, and read:

"Great Entente protests vehemently against restoration. Threatens intervention. BETHLEN."

Karl looked up aghast. Who had notified the Premier that the royal convoy was on its way? And how did Bethlen know so accurately where to direct a telegram so as to intercept the King? The answer must lie here in Raab, the flower-decked city which still echoed with the strains of the national anthem. Despite ovations and parades, a Judas moved through these walled streets.

Gratz and Rakovszky ventured a guess. General Lörinczy, military commandant of Raab, had been seen at his telephone for a protracted interval after the troop train came to a halt outside the city limits. Brisk questioning of a young woman at the telephone exchange netted the answer that Budapest had been on the wires that morning, although the operator could not remember further details. This seemed sufficiently incriminating. The King demanded Lörinczy's arrest.

It was Lehár who carried out the order. He set out with a detachment of Sopron gendarmes and brought back the quaking

general on short notice. During the inquiry that followed, Lörinczy readily admitted his guilt. Deeming it in line with duty, he had called upon Horthy for instructions in a situation with which—during more than thirty years of service—he had never been confronted.

Karl listened in silence. His outrage at Lörinczy's betrayal subsided and gave way to understanding. After all, the man had found himself trapped between two loyalties. Whichever choice he made would bring down on his head the wrath of the opposing faction. No, it was not Lörinczy who deserved the blame for what had happened; he, Karl, was bringing dissension into Hungary by forcing an issue for which the war-torn nation was not ripe.

"Never mind, Lörinczy," he said to the General. "You may go."

Lehár, Ostenburg and Hegedüs, however, did not share the King's tolerant impulse. Exchanging cryptic glances, they escorted their prisoner to the far end of the troop train where, beyond sight and hearing of His Majesty, they clapped Lörinczy into the caboose.

"We can use him for a hostage," was Lehár's comment as he turned the key.

Gratz and Rakovszky had meanwhile prevailed upon the King not to retreat but to issue orders for immediate action. The Legitimists, they argued, must reach Budapest before the government had time to evolve a plan of defense. Horthy and Bethlen were still in a quandary; the Budapest telegram had not been a threat so much as a cry of distress. The fact that it made reference to the Great Entente and possible "intervention" could be taken lightly, since it smacked too clearly of the bogey methods employed last Easter. Decidedly this was no time to lose nerve.

Like Prince Eugene of Savoy, rushing against the Turks, so Karl must take his citadel by storm.

The simile was inspiring but not apt. Far from resembling the Knight of Zenta, Karl had inherited the hapless complaisance of another vacillating Hapsburg, Maximilian of Mexico. Like his great-uncle Max, he was plagued by a fatal ability to see both sides of every question. He knew himself to be Hungary's rightful king, yet at the same time he approved of Horthy's efforts to preserve the nation from Entente reprisals, even if in so doing the Regent must take up arms against Hapsburg. In much the same manner Maximilian had faced the Mexican patriot, Juárez, aware of the latter's hatred, yet willing to concede the patriotism that inspired it. Such unwarped tolerance had no place in politics. He who is "born to shiver in the draft of an open mind" could never fit himself to the pattern of successful prejudice. In trying to be king, Karl was not sufficiently biased in his own favor, which meant that no one else would be. The ardor of his followers was dimmed through lack of ego in their leader.

Irresolutely the troop train, bearing now more than four thousand volunteers (with new recruits swelling the total at every station), moved on. It rumbled through Nagy Szent Iván and headed for Komorn (Komárom), Karl and Zita following at a judicious distance. But progress was again halted when news came from the van that a portion of tracks had been dynamited by the Komorn garrison.

"We have sappers to take care of that," snorted Lehár. With a contingent of men he dashed forthwith into the breach, while the King's party stopped on the outskirts of Ács.

The hours dragged by before temporary repairs had been finished and the expedition could once more get under way. Lehár, sweating in the sun despite the day's low temperature,

had lost his temper. He wanted to set fire to Komorn and reduce the treacherous city to ashes. Again the King demurred.

"Have you not understood," His Majesty flared up, "that there is to be no bloodshed or destruction in my name? I shall telephone Budapest from here and we will negotiate."

Consternation broke out among the royal followers. "Negotiate? Your Majesty, that takes time!"

"Well?"

"Time is the one factor we cannot afford to lose. From here on things must go blow on blow until the goal is reached. Further hesitation may be fatal to Your Majesty's best interests—"

But Karl did not order the burning of Komorn. Instead he accompanied Rakovszky into the grimy Ács station and demanded immediate connection with the capital. The Budapest Ministry answered, with Bethlen on the wire. Rakovszky introduced himself as the King's newly appointed prime minister, to which Count Bethlen must have made a scornful reply, for the ensuing verbiage bore an acrimonious tone.

"Since when?" Rakovszky fumed. "Since last night! And it will behoove all traitors to take notice—"

The King placed his hand over the speaking tube. This was not at all what he had had in mind. To heap insult upon the established authorities would certainly not help matters.

"Let me speak," he commanded.

But Gratz, standing beside Rakovszky, gestured frantically in an effort to warn the monarch against pleading his own case. If Karl talked to Bethlen the game was up, for such action would be tantamount to asking permission if the King and Queen might enter their own capital. No, one must not lose face to such a degree as that. Rakovszky must now seize the bull by both

horns and pour out in no uncertain terms whatever there was to say. It proved a staggering earful:

"We order you, Bethlen, to turn over the reins to His Majesty! Your government has only one duty left, namely to maintain order in the city until our arrival tonight. Meanwhile all guards must be removed from the Sandberg Tunnel through which we intend to pass within the hour."

Pause. Bethlen was obviously protesting against such orders and making the alternative suggestion that Karl "visit" Budapest alone for amicable consultation. Rakovszky's eyebrows arched sardonically. Turn over the King as hostage? That would indeed suit Horthy and his gang!

"Impossible!" he shouted back. "His Majesty will not even come to the telephone until our stipulations have been obeyed."

Another pause. Then, from the other end, a request for time. Since the evacuation of troops from the Sandberg Tunnel was strictly a military question Count Bethlen could make no disposition before talking to Horthy.

"Very well," Rakovszky agreed. "We give you fifteen minutes to make up your mind."

He hung up the receiver with a triumphant bang. Already Rakovszky felt himself every inch a statesman; a rôle of prime minister swathed his soul like Caesar's cloak.

During the interval of waiting, Lehár and Ostenburg rushed through the station into the King's presence. Colonel Perczel, commandant of the Komorn garrison, was obviously expecting aid from Budapest. Semaphore banners could be seen fluttering in the distance, and there was movement—as of troop transports—over the eastern sandpits. The time to strike was now or never.

But Bethlen had promised to answer within the quarter hour.

Even though twenty-five minutes had passed, the call might come at any moment. The King insisted upon waiting.

Dusk had begun to fall, and still no news. Slowly the Regent's strategy became apparent; Horthy was holding the royal train at bay while his own re-enforcements scurried into position, thus putting the King at a tremendous disadvantage. Although further argument with Bethlen was patently useless, Rakovszky sacrificed another ten minutes ringing Budapest and trailing the harried Premier to his house. As Bethlen picked up the receiver a verbal bomb exploded in his ear:

"We shall arrive by morning and string you all up on the gallows!" was the exact transmission over the wires from Ács, where Rakovszky rehearsed the issuing of his first court-martial. Only when this was done did the royal party scramble back aboard the train, which glided gingerly across the newly-repaired rails.

Since night had come and it would be folly to provide the enemy with a lighted target, the train traveled at a snail's pace and in complete darkness. Outside Komorn the amazing discovery was made that, far from being hostile, the local garrison had suddenly deserted Horthy's cause and turned en masse to the monarchist side. Only Colonel Perczel had barely escaped with his life to join the government forces. Naturally this unforeseen development gave new impetus to the royal followers, who had all but lost heart. Intoxicated by the demonstrations of enthusiastic Komorn burghers, the King and Queen felt themselves again swept forward along a path laid out by destiny. It did not seem possible that anything could stop them now.

Bolstered by additional volunteers, the monarch's train made a hurried sally from the town, so as to waste no precious minutes which might be of utmost importance later on. But some miles

beyond Komorn, on the Buda road, a speeding motorcar drew up beside the tracks. Two gesticulating figures leaped out and signaled the train to halt. Lehár recognized Lieutenant Otrubay and Minister Vass, who bore a letter from Horthy together with copies of half a dozen notes from the Big and Little Ententes. By letting His Majesty see the seriousness of the crisis about to be provoked, the Regent hoped yet to avert calamity. But Karl's advisors were disdainful of mere words on paper.

"How do we know," Rakovszky voiced their collective suspicions, "that these notes are not false?"

Vass bristled. "Unfortunately they are genuine."

"Even so," Rakovszky continued, "all this talk of intervention is ridiculous. Have we not a League of Nations? The matter can only be settled at Geneva, with both the Ententes as well as Hungary abiding by a peaceful solution. Thus we risk nothing by our justified bid for restoration of the King."

Having delivered himself of this peroration, Rakovszky bowed and led the Budapest gentlemen back to their car. He wished them a happy journey, adding that all further messages had best be presented to His Majesty at the palace tomorrow. With this the unofficial Prime Minister ran for his train and gave the signal to depart.

Even as he ran, a final warning reached his ears. "Someone more dangerous than Horthy stands in your way," shouted Vass, as his car gathered speed and passed the royal convoy. "Remember Gömbös!"

Gömbös? A name not conjured with in the King's plans, yet one which during the past thirty-six hours had grown in importance, for Gömbös had become self-appointed leader of an anti-Legitimist Party which recruited its members among youthful students at the national university. Bands of militarized acade-

micians were already marching under his colors, while younger boys were being lured from preparatory schools to join the new movement. In procuring such followers Gömbös had an easy task; the adolescent mind, unburdened by memories, could be enlisted for any cause involving heroism. Young men fight for the sheer thrill of fighting. Reasons, noble or base, have very little to do with it.

For Karl and Zita this truth became only too apparent as the train neared the castle of Tata, home of Prince Ferenc Eszterházy, where news awaited them that Gömbös and his forces had taken up positions on the elevation called *Türkensprung* (Turk's Jump) just beyond Budaörs. The situation looked serious for a monarch who hoped to make a bloodless entry into his capital. At all events, the entire Eszterházy household resolved to board the royal train in a gallant gesture of allegiance, so that the world might never say that Karl's restoration had miscarried through lack of prestige among its supporters. The name of Eszterházy was as old as Hungary itself. Even while England's Ambassador Holder pressed Horthy with Entente threats and strictures, the flower of Hungarian knight-hood offered obeisance to the anointed King.

Overcrowded and splintering in all its joints, the royal train moved on, always within hailing distance of the vanguard. Dawn of the following morning brought a short stop at Bia-Torbagy, then at the suburb of Budaörs and the great viaduct whence it was but an hour's tramway ride to Budapest proper.

"Thank Heaven," breathed Zita to her nervous spouse, "we are almost there—"

Never in her life would she speak words more true. The goal was almost, though not quite, within grasp; from this point on it would recede again into the unattainable. At the far end of

the viaduct waited two men in dust-covered uniforms, arms lifted in the air.

"Turn back, turn back!" they shouted. "The troop cars are being fired on!"

The train came to a sudden halt, jostling its human cargo into wild confusion. Pushing his head through a broken window, Karl demanded details. Who started the shooting? Had Lehár disobeyed orders? If so, his insubordination would meet with the gravest punishment.

The men below shook frantic heads. No, Lehár's forces had been taken by surprise just as the walls of Budaörs came into the view. The whole town must be bristling with sharpshooters; already prisoners had been captured who declared that Gömbös had drummed together three additional student corps to supplement the government forces. It was useless for the King to move another inch nearer the scene of battle.

Karl paled with shock. The very thing he abhorred with all his soul had now come to pass. Within earshot he could hear Hungarians firing on Hungarians in brother feud, the ghastliest form of war. That he, the crowned King, should have brought this evil upon his people was too monstrous to contemplate. If they should all veer suddenly about and tear him to pieces it would be no more than just, since no man had the right to split a nation within itself—no, not even a sovereign bent upon reconquering his throne. . . .

Out of this dismal reverie he was roused at last by a soft urgent voice. It was the Queen's.

"Have you forgotten," asked Zita, her cool eyes taking in the royal entourage, "that this is Sunday? If we cannot celebrate the Lord's Day in our capital, we must return to Bia-Torbagy where there is a church."

Karl looked at her aghast. Astounding woman! Was she so bound by dogma that no manner of crisis could alter the letter of her creed? Had her Catholic formalism grown so rigid that piety was stretched *ad absurdum* even during an acute dilemma such as this? If so, religion itself must border upon the risible or grotesque, since there were times when earthly business could not but conflict hopelessly with canonical commitments of the most sacred order. Only the most fanatical extremist would be capable of abandoning reason in favor of orthodoxy.

It happened that he judged her falsely. True, she was religious to the point of bigotry, but her austere devotion was open to compromise. Had there been no trouble at this moment in Budaörs, she would have been content to forego Mass while the march on Horthy's stronghold took its course. God would have had to wait until Zita wound up her dynastic affairs, before hearing His glories chanted through her lips. Once safely entrenched as queen, she would of course have offered Him appeasement and a scented candle in quittance of the lapse into which circumstance had driven her.

Just now, however, it behooved them all to enlist Jehovah's aid. With everyone bent on flight, Zita knew of only one way to stave off a general panic. She had not come this far in order to be frightened off by a few bullets. Retreat was shameful. Instead, let every person in the royal retinue pause to do honor to the Sabbath, after which (unless she hit upon further inspired measures) there would still be time to escape.

At the mention of Bia-Torbagy it was disclosed that two priests had joined the King's train in Oedenburg. One of them was equipped with missal, stole, beads, crucifix and sacring bells. With these appurtenances plus table, chairs and a small rug from the hospital car it was possible to set up an outdoor altar between

the railroad tracks. Brow uncovered, the King, his suite and bodyguard knelt on the ground with Zita, unmindful of her precarious physical state, beside them.

Since the thoughtful cleric had brought a bit of communion bread, the sacrament was offered to the royal couple who, prior to partaking of it, underwent confession. The latter process called for privacy—although the King and Queen, engaged since Switzerland in uninterrupted travel, could hardly have been guilty of unmentionable iniquities. Still, this was no time to break with tradition. Lacking a proper confessional, the priest climbed cautiously into an empty powder magazine which had been set on end. A few loose boards were propped together for an improvised stockade behind which, screened from view, the royal penitents canvassed their consciences and made a brief recital of imperial sins.

The air reverberated now and then with echoes of a distant fusillade. As the service proceeded and silver chimes proclaimed the miracle of transubstantiation, a harsh staccato punctuated the *Sanctus*. Artillery! The Budaörs encounter was taking on the character of a siege.

With both knees on the ground, the King and Queen prayed silently, while round about them a subtle change took place. As if by mute accord the soldiers had swiftly raised themselves on one foot. Still lending one ear to the priest's incantations, they cocked the other toward the fray, like chargers on the scent of combat. All thoughts of flight seemed to have vanished as a restless eagerness for action quivered through the assemblage and the men held themselves poised in the position of sprinters ready for a race. Pulses throbbed at fever pitch, awaiting the signal to attack.

It happened in the midst of this tension that Corporal Jelfy of

Budapest, who was a camera addict of considerable skill, polished his photographic lens and focused it upon the incongruous scene. Though mist clouded the early morning and it was not possible to catch more than the royal couple's profiles, Corporal Jelfy snapped a passable picture.

Barely a second after the shutter clicked, the extraordinary pantomime broke up. Priest, acolyte, altar and prayer book were brushed aside like so much stage property, as a vigilant outpost gave a cry of alarm.

"To the aid of our comrades! Forward!"

The waiting men leaped to their feet. With the impact of stampeding cattle they stormed away, leaving the sovereigns to their orisons.

CHAPTER 22

ONLY a score of persons remained behind, among them the frightened ecclesiast and his aide, as well as Rakovszky, Andrásy and Eszterházy. The King and Queen felt apprehensive in this gravely silent company, though they were not alone for long. Their circle was soon to be augmented by a stream of wounded borne on stretchers from the firing line. Horse-drawn carriages and peasant carts had been pressed into service along the way, their puzzled drivers quailing with fear, since no one had bothered to explain just what the fighting was about. On one of the carts General Hegedüs arrived with a report for the King. It was not cheerful news.

"Our front is split," the General stated anxiously. "As we were unloading our men the attack broke suddenly, cutting us off from Ostenburg's brigade."

Karl jumped to his feet. "Are we losing?" he asked bluntly. "Hegedüs, I want the truth!"

"It is hard to say, Sire. The breach has widened and we are out of touch—"

"But our forces aren't strong enough to fight in separate units, are they?"

"No, Sire."

There was a pause during which the monarch's agonized features betrayed the pattern of his thoughts. A restoration by strategy, by *coup d'état* or by an outright gamble on popular sentiment—to these measures Karl would willingly be a party. But civil war seemed to him unthinkable. Kingship was worth-

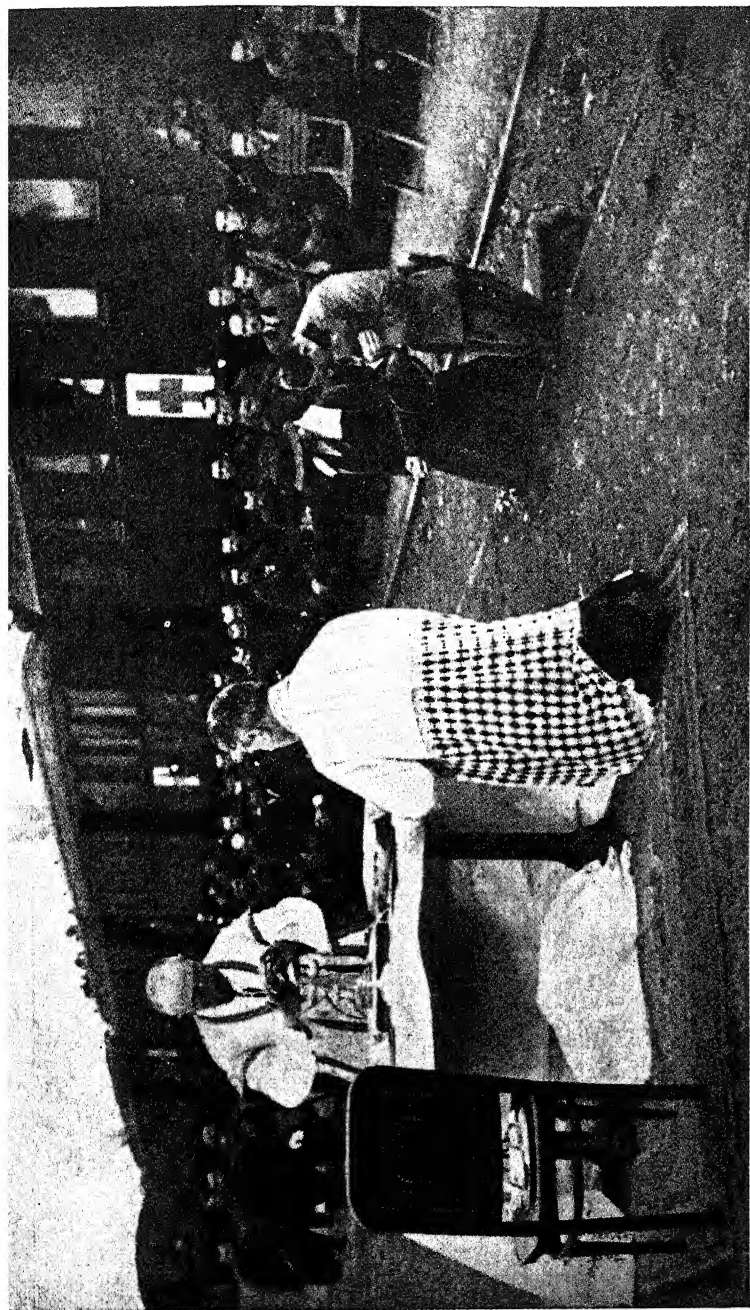
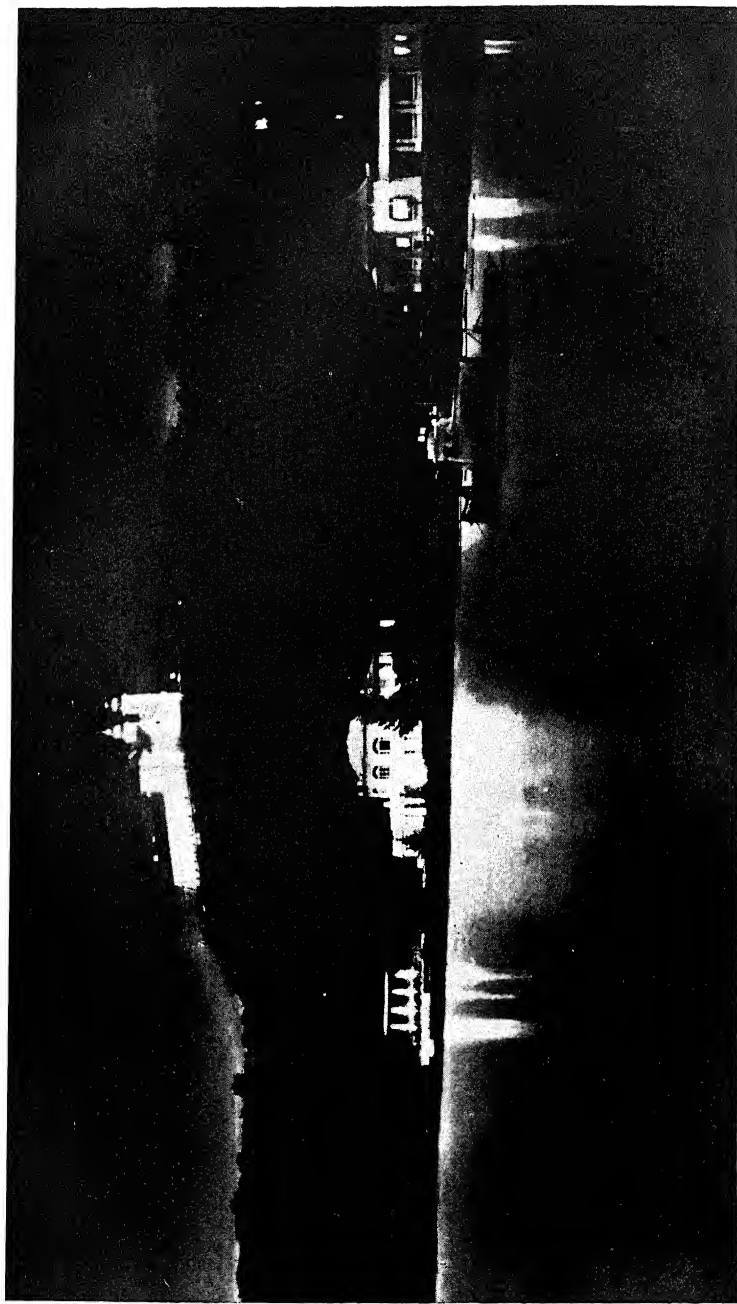


Photo Jelfy, Budapest.

Karl and Zita attending Mass before the battle of Budaörs.



Tihany Monastery on Lake Balaton.

Photo György, Budapest.

less if it entailed the warring of brother against brother on the very soil to which he wished to bring prosperity and peace.

"I'll have no massacre of Hungarians," he said with a finality that was unmistakable. "For or against me, they must be compelled to lay down arms."

Hegedüs looked baffled. Though he would likewise have preferred a bloodless settlement (having two sons who at this very moment fought in Horthy's cause) he did not see how matters at the moment could take a different course. But Karl's vision was unclouded by the cabals of generalship. He wanted no throne at the cost of human lives, therefore the battle must stop. That was all.

"And who is to call a halt?" asked Hegedüs. "If we surrender, court-martial awaits us all. Gömbös has already given warning."

Karl made a gesture as if to brush aside such worries. "There is no talk of surrender. I shall go to the front myself and demand a truce."

"Impossible! No one can be recognized across the smoking fields. A blast of bullets will be Your Majesty's reception—"

The monarch paid no heed. He ordered the locomotive of his train detached from the tender. Standing beside the engineer, he asked to be driven straight toward the firing line. It was at this point that Zita flung her arms up in the air and cried out with terror: "Stop him, stop him!"

His eyes pleaded for understanding. "I must, Zita—there is no other way."

"Then I shall go with you!" she insisted.

He saw again that there was no limit to her courage. Her body heavy with child, her cheeks the color of death, she talked of sharing his place in the exposed cab of a grimy locomotive. . . . He wanted to laugh at the absurdity of such a thought. But Zita

was not laughing. She meant what she said, and to prove it she stumbled across the weed-infested tracks, catching her skirt in the brambles that lined her way. Once beside the engine, she requested a hoisting hand. Since royalty could not make a domestic scene in public, and no one besides the King was in a position to restrain the Queen, there was nothing for it but to do her bidding. A chair was placed inside the grease-spattered cab and Zita calmly entrenched herself upon it. At this, the members of the suite could not hold back, lest such display of feminine valor reflect upon themselves. Accordingly the tender was again attached and Hegedüs, Andrásy, Rakovszky and Eszterházy climbed up to a precarious berth atop the coal. At the last minute someone remembered to affix a white lunch cloth to the locomotive's funnel as a flag of peace.

The whistle blew and in another moment the extraordinary tandem—bearing one of history's oddest peace missions—was on its way, nosing directly eastward across the plain. Along the tracks the evidence of fighting grew more ominous as wounded stragglers shambled by in flight or dropped exhausted to the ground. A lonely switch tower marked Number 17 seemed to have been transformed into an emergency station, for in its lower room men lay piled in moaning heaps.

The battlefield was now quite near. Coveys of birds fluttered in panic through the air, unable to find a landing place. Partridge, grouse, pheasants appeared in flocks, stirred up by the strange storm which mankind alone produces. Gentle-eyed beasts of forest and glade stood trembling before the unearthly game of war.

Dusk had begun to fall as the actual line of fire was reached. Karl threw his military greatcoat over the Queen and placed himself squarely in front of her while the small locomotive

dodged the hail of bullets prophesied by Hegedüs. Warning cries rose from the shallow trenches as royalist troopers recognized the King. Rising out of the mist Commander Ostenburg suddenly appeared; he dragged an injured foot, though he was obviously not *hors de combat*. With frantic gestures he strove to halt the royal caravan, but it rushed past him, its tattered flag torn to shreds as the chugging locomotive braved a new barrage. Another kilometer and the King would be surrounded by his foes. He would be dragged, dead rather than alive, from the riddled engine cab, since it was inconceivable that Fate would spare him now.

But Karl's last hour was not yet at hand. Destiny's pattern bore a different design of less heroic and flamboyant color. Not for him the death-ride on an iron Pegasus. The wild and daring rush into the enemy camp was interrupted suddenly by a double salvo which struck the engineer's right shoulder. Incapacitated, the man was able only to slow down the speed and to point out the mechanism that would throw the engine in reverse. While Karl and Zita busied themselves with first-aid efforts, Hegedüs leaped into the cab and took over the controls. By the time the King grew aware of what was happening the locomotive had already returned to the Ostenburg line. Here a short council of war was held and, despite Karl's vehement protestations, it was agreed that the sovereigns must be removed from the zone of danger. Prince Eszterházy pledged himself to shelter Their Majesties at his home in Tata.

"But that is preposterous," the King protested. "I want to make peace in Budapest—"

Ostenburg, Hegedüs and even the fiery Lehár shook gloomy heads. In less than an hour's time the royalist front would be demolished. The troops were holding out just long enough to

let the King escape; after that there would be a chaotic scramble, every man for himself and his own skin.

Karl's brows met in an agonized line as he reviewed the terrible dilemma into which his own presence had driven several thousand hapless people. Until the King was safe, these men would keep their oath, waging a losing fight in a cause that was already lost. Worse still, each minute of delay reduced their number and added to the dead already on his conscience. Could he afford to sacrifice them all in a stubborn attempt to carry out his own designs? The truce he sought, would it be accepted by Gömbös? Most likely Hegedüs was right in saying that no man could reach the enemy lines alive. No man—and no woman. He must remember Zita, and the children who had been left motherless so far from home. For their sake, if not for his own, he must retreat.

In haste the journey westward was resumed, with the bandaged engineer once more at the throttle. In the vicinity of Biatorbagy the royal convoy was picked up and attached so that Their Majesties could abandon the grimy engine cab and return to the relative comforts of their "private" car. Night had fallen and the roar of battle was dying down. This circumstance caused Karl to pause repeatedly in his flight for the rescue of as many wounded as could be transported to the waiting train. Since pursuit was almost certain, at least no helpless victims would be left in the enemy's path.

Due to these ministrations the fugitives did not reach Tata until late the following day. Here dismal news awaited them. The retreat from Budaörs was in full swing and government troops had spread a net across the western frontiers, cutting off all possibility of escape into Austria. Already the railroad tracks beyond Tata had been torn up.

Prince Eszterházy tried to inject a hopeful note by pointing out that to Magyars the time-honored walls of Tata were inviolate. "In this house, Sire," he promised, "we shall be safe."

But the statement proved untrue, for that very night marauding brigands attempted to break into the castle in a bold attempt to kidnap the King. Only Eszterházy's personal valor in hurling one of the villains from an upper balcony served to confound the waiting accomplices, who took to their heels without further ceremony.

Other perils threatened as the Ostenburg regiment, swarming through the fields, found itself trapped just beyond the Tata gates. Hand-to-hand fighting ensued, with saber and bayonet, until the last royalists were annihilated. For Karl this was the ghastly climax of a long heartbreaking nightmare, the end of which could even yet not be foreseen.

Strangely, the victorious government forces made no further effort to attack the Eszterházy premises, though it was known that Their Majesties had found refuge within. The reason for this unexpected leniency lay in a drastic change of front caused by the attitude of the Little Entente, particularly Czechoslovakia, where Premier Eduard Benes had risen to new importance. On October 26 the Prague authorities had surprised Horthy with a categorical demand for extradition of the Hapsburg "usurper" in order to try him before a court of Little Entente officials. The actual text threatened:

"... If he [the King] is given further protection, the Little Entente will regard such action as a *casus belli*, and will order mobilization of her armies in order to obtain final settlement of the Hapsburg problem in Hungary, and to eliminate once and forever the danger presented by the House of Hapsburg in Central Europe. . . ."

Horthy did not take kindly to such dictation from an enemy politician. What was more, even the anti-royalist Gömbös balked. To bar the King from Budapest for reasons of international expediency was one thing, but to turn him over to a preposterous post-war state (which to Hungarian minds had no excuse, other than Versailles vindictiveness, for its very existence) proved to be quite another. Gömbös and Horthy were abruptly overcome by deep concern over Their Majesties' welfare. Instead of acceding to the Czech clamor, they resolved upon a startling measure which was couched in no less startling terms, namely: lest the Prague rabble break across the border for a raid on the Eszterházy estate, the Regent offered Karl and Zita a hide-out in the monastery of Tihány on the shores of Lake Balaton. A special deputation from Budapest, headed by Colonel Siménfalvy, would provide the royal couple with safe-conduct to the new retreat.

Siménfalvy had little trouble persuading Their Majesties to leave Tata, since Karl was loath to cause further anxiety to his friends. Thus the transfer to Tihány took place with the utmost dispatch.

Less generous were Horthy's dealings with the King's disbanded troops and their leaders. Survivors of the former were summarily court-martialed, while heavy sentences awaited Hegedüs, Andrásy, Rakovszky, Ostenburg, Gratz and Lehár. For many weeks these men were hounded from one hideaway to another, until all but Lehár had been rounded up, the last having fled to the Viennese home of his famous composer-brother.

At Tihány, meanwhile, the King and Queen occupied two narrow rooms with a small vestibule on the second floor of the ancient friary. They had been given the abbot's best plush-

covered furniture, a strait monastic bed for Zita, a horse-hair sofa for His Majesty, as well as a bulging washstand with bowl, pitcher and soap dish of ornate rococo design. Since the bedroom measured a scant nine feet across (most of which seemed to be taken up by the washstand) Karl spent as little time as possible in its stuffy confines. Instead he stood for hours at the barred window of the sitting room which looked out upon the opalescent waters of the lake. The opalescence, he had long ago been told, was due to shallowness and to a peculiar angle at which the sun shone in these parts. Well, he had time—for days on end—to reflect upon this singular phenomenon, just as he found interminable leisure to ponder the *stones of Tihány*, which were shaped like goats' feet and took their name from a legendary flock lost in a snow storm atop the hill.

Two armed guards strode up and down in front of the royal apartments, not for the purpose of restraining the sovereigns, but rather to protect their lives against possible acts of nihilism. A rumor was making the rounds that hired assassins had planned to destroy the King and Queen at Tata, thus furnishing a grim parallel to the blood bath of Ekaterinburg, where Tsar Nikolai II and his family had perished.

Unable to believe that murderers could raise their hands against him, Karl took the presence of the guards amiss. On first sighting them he complained bitterly to the abbot. "You are holding me prisoner!" he accused.

The pious man did not know what to say. Assuredly it looked as though the King and Queen were not to take a single step unwatched. Even during Mass, when Their Majesties knelt at the foot of the great marble stairs that led to the proscenium-like altar, the officers lingered outside the chapel door. Perhaps it was solicitude on Regent Horthy's part? But on the other

hand, perhaps it was what Karl suspected it to be—strict supervision, lest further Legitimist machinations were afoot.

At all events, the abbott did not show surprise when, some days later, the King again gave vent to his impatience. The sight of his two "gaolers" had become too much. High-strung and distraught with inevitable claustrophobia, Karl emerged from the room and tossed his sword at the officers' feet.

"Why don't you finish your task?" he cried passionately. "Why don't you put me in chains?"

The men did not respond nor did they touch the sword lying before them in mock surrender. Two nights and a day went by before a lay brother picked up the weapon from the floor and placed it gently on the King's table.

During all this time the powers in Budapest had not been idle. Representatives of the Great Entente clustered about the Regent's desk, clamoring for a final solution of the Hapsburg conundrum. Ambassador Holder of Great Britain; the Italian Minister, Prince Gastagneto; the French *Chargé d'Affaires*, Monsieur Fouchet; the United States Minister, Mr. Grant Smith—each proposed a different ruse whereby the King might be persuaded to sign the long-pending document of abdication. Yet none of these gentlemen was destined to enjoy the satisfaction of personal triumph, for not a single ruse would work. Pliable though he might be in other respects, Karl remained stiff-necked and inexorable in the matter of relinquishing the Crown.

Several deputations were sent to Tihány, headed by Minister Koloman Kánya; by General Eugen von Sárkány; by the Primate of Hungary, Prince Czernoch. For all of them Karl had the same reply, namely a firm and uncompromising refusal.

"I happen to know the laws of Hungary," he said to Kánya. "Documents already signed by me cannot be altered in my life-

time; therefore my oath of kingship is irrevocable and to be retracted only after death."

To Sárkány he offered still more trenchant arguments. "I was crowned ruler over a Hungary embracing sixty-four departments, of which today there are left but fourteen. My abdication would condone and ratify this mutilation of our lands. But if I stand inflexible, Hungary will uphold the validity of her former boundaries."

Lastly, to Primate Czernoch, Karl presented a written manifesto of his tenets, which provided a key to the half-mystic attributes of Hapsburg dynasticism:

"As long as God gives me strength to carry out my duty, I shall not abdicate the throne to which I am bound by sacred oath.

"As wearer of the Holy Crown, I shall maintain its rights by professing my willingness to remain in office, despite all perils confronting me.

"It is my belief that only thus can the integrity of Hungary be restored.

"KARL."

Having made his standpoint clear, the King had nothing more to say. In Budapest, however, opinions differed and the foreign delegates decided upon drastic action. If Karl and Zita lacked the wisdom to withdraw voluntarily from the political arena, they must be forcibly removed. All abdication projects were therefore abandoned and the Allied commission concentrated thenceforth on the question of renewed exile.

Both Villa Prangins and Castle Hertenstein could no longer be counted on as places of refuge, since the Swiss Government was done with hospitality. Already Britain's Foreign Office had become embarrassed by repeated inquiries from Berne as to the

disposition of the imperial children, left at Hertenstein with a confused attendant, while their parents dashed across Europe in search of vanished glory. Unless the League of Nations could come to a quick decision with regard to their fate, the youngsters would be interned in a Zurich orphanage.

This put the matter squarely up to the Allied commission, the members of which pored now over Horthy's thumb-marked atlas in search of an Ultima Thule for a jobless king. World conditions had changed considerably since the War, particularly in the matter of travel. Where formerly people had crossed the borders of one country to another with nothing more than the routine of customs inspection to consider, they now required passports and a quota number before gaining admission. Even the most insignificant nations on the map had set up an elaborate tariff and a system of consular visas to baffle their neighbors. This maze of red tape made the plight of homeless politicians or dethroned rulers all the more acute, since they lacked proper credentials permitting them to qualify as immigrants. Moreover, Karl and Zita were a financial liability; unlike Wilhelm of Hohenzollern, Tsar Ferdinand of Bulgaria, the surviving Romanoff clan, or even Portugal's elegant Manoel, they had not stored away a golden nest-egg in some foreign bank. Their assets, liquid and otherwise, were swallowed up in Austria-Hungary's *débâcle*. As a result, while Holland welcomed a tax-paying Kaiser, and British society lionized the handsome Braganza no less than the shipwrecked Grand Dukes with their Bank of London credit, nobody longed to harbor the indigent Karl and his plethora of heirs. In chorus Italy, France, Belgium and Great Britain expressed polite regrets and padlocked their diplomatic guest rooms.

"His Majesty might come to America," suggested Mr. Smith

in an amiable nasal drawl, "for a lecture tour, like Dickens and—er—Oscar Wilde." But the proposal garnered no applause.

It was the Czechoslovakian delegate who approached the question in terms of historic proportions. "St. Helena!" he cried. "That is the place for despots—"

But British statesmanship was not as nearsighted as that. To imbue a fallen Hapsburg with Napoleonic glory was tantamount to raising him upon a pedestal for all the world to see. No, far from lending him importance, one must reduce Karl to insignificance. He must be buried in some distant, unfrequented spot, where neither calendar nor clock had any meaning, and where the drama of martyrdom was lost in oblivion.

Such a spot, in those dreary post-war days, was the small island of Madeira.

CHAPTER 23

LONG before attaining popularity as a pleasure resort, halfway along the shipping route to Capetown, Madeira had been an outpost for European navigators bent on solving the riddle of the earth's form. Here Christopher Columbus had spent part of his youth, roaming over the sister islands of Porto Santo, Desertas, Bugio and Selvagens while he dreamed of cutting a sea path to the Indies. In fact, before plunging into his great adventure, the future discoverer married a daughter of Porto Santo's first governor, Donna Felipa Moniz Perestrello.

The islands belonged to Portugal, having been first occupied by one Gonsalves Zarco in 1419. But England laid a sentimental passive claim to them as well, for, almost six-hundred years ago, a sailor named Robert Machin had eloped with a girl from Bristol and, heading for Africa, had sighted the towering cliffs of Cabo Girão when they were yet unknown to man. This constitutes discovery in any tongue, but by the time Robert Machin's descendants reported their forebear's experience to Mother England, the Portuguese were in possession. From that time on to modern days Britannia has never ceased to be Madeira-conscious, a fact which prompted Ambassador Holder's choice of Funchal as an ideal place of banishment. Two purposes would be served by Karl's removal to the African isles: distance from home would render contact difficult for Legitimist die-hards who might continue their attempts at restoration, and the necessary chore of surveillance over the royal prisoners would give England a foothold at this most strategic point along her colonial shipping

lanes. Yes, reiterated Albion's plenipotentiary, Madeira was just the thing.

"The King is ill," Horthy interposed, "and I am told the Queen is expectant. Perhaps there is no hurry to send them away before spring?"

Vehement protests filled the conference room. On the contrary! The sunny climate was so beneficial. Would that they all might be exiled to such a tropic paradise. . . .

Thus Karl and Zita's fate was sealed.

To be sure, no one informed the royal couple of their destination, but toward the end of October a messenger arrived at Tihány with a laconic order. The King and Queen were to hold themselves in readiness for immediate deportation.

Karl penned a protest which was carried back to Budapest in the courier's pouch, though no one paid attention to the text. It ran:

"I hereby declare the resolution of the National Assembly, ordering my deportation, to be the result of foreign pressure; it is therefore unlawful, ineffective and contrary to the Constitution, forcing me to enter the most emphatic protest against it. Again I invoke the constitutional rights vested in me as Apostolic King, crowned with the crown of Saint Stephen. KARL."

These words did not halt preparations. For some time past a British flotilla of torpedo boats and destroyers had passed the Dardanelles, entered the Black Sea and steamed up the Danube, through Bucharest, Belgrade and Baja into the heart of Budapest. Here anchors had been dropped at strategic intervals which insured Downing Street a key position for the control of the Nibelungen basin and the adjacent Balkans.

The presence of Albion's men-of-war throughout Aegean and Mediterranean waters made the King's departure by sea both logical and expedient. One of the river patrol boats, H.M.S. *Monitor*, was given secret papers to clear port at dawn on November 1. During the night Karl and Zita were fetched from their retreat by a squad of military cars and motorcycle escorts. Again the King put pen to paper in a pathetic adjuration:

"I protest against the unconstitutionality of decisions made by a clique of ambassadors, who now hand me over to the commander of the British Danube flotilla. By the laws of this country I have an indisputable right to remain on Hungarian soil. KARL."

But the document, dated Tihány, 1921, proved even more ineffectual than its predecessors. It remained on the table in the King's cramped sitting room, to be gathered up with other discarded effects by the cenobite who swept the monastery cells.

The master of the *Monitor*, Captain Johnson, waited meanwhile near the docks of Bártacsek, where the great railroad bridge spanned the Danube. As the royal party arrived he ordered an armchair carried up the steep embankment steps; having been told of the Queen's condition he had arranged for her to be conveyed, litter-fashion, aboard his ship. Also, to make the ordeal less humiliating, the gallant skipper had draped the chair with his most prized possession, a weathered Union Jack.

A few moments later the motorcade came to a stop beside the rushing stream. Three Entente officers, representatives of France, Italy and Great Britain, leaped to the ground, followed by the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Lorenzo Schioppa. A detachment of Honvéd Hussars formed an honor guard through which the King and Queen moved silently.

On reaching the top step of the embankment Zita caught sight of the portable chair. A faint smile trembled on her lips as she turned to the British commander and thanked him for his courtesy—the small kindness had brought a quick flush to her white cheeks. But she would not allow herself to be lifted aboard the enemy ship.

“I am quite able to walk,” she said softly.

Scarcely leaning on her husband’s arm, she covered the short distance up the gangway and reached the well-scrubbed deck. The Nuncio raised his hand to bless the departing couple, while the Entente officers touched their caps in a formal salute. An engine started and the small boat quivered from bow to stern while its stack belched forth black clouds of smoke. The King stood near the prow, his eyes fixed straight ahead.

The group of spectators on shore disbanded and turned to go. A Honvéd captain muttered an order and the soldiers fell in line to ascend the concrete stairs. But as they did so an unforeseen breach of discipline occurred—for, one and all, the men veered suddenly about and swung their shakos in mid-air.

“*Viszontlátásra!*” they cried in unison. (“Until we meet again!”)

The King and Queen looked back, tears veiling their eyes. To Zita the chorused farewell became a hymn of hope, but Karl’s ears were deceived no longer. “*Auf Wiedersehen!*” he had once said to Austria, certain that destiny would bring him back. But since that day he had learned a cruel lesson: there was no returning to the scenes of yesteryear.

Gently the boat glided downstream, her metal sides agleam in the bright rays of the rising sun. Soon she was hidden by a wooded isle, only to reappear in the distance, fading farther away until her narrow outlines took on the shape of a floating

coffin. Archbishop Schioppa employed the grim simile as he addressed Colonel Siménfalvy:

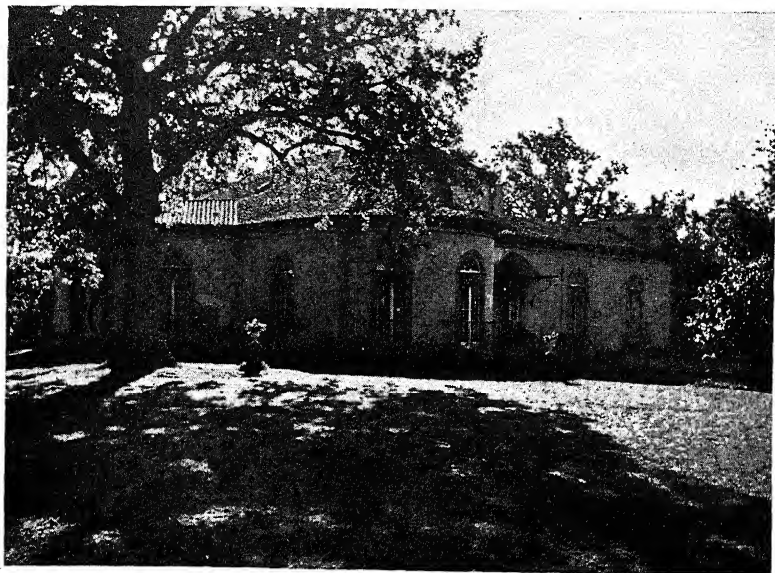
"A broken man, and much more than a broken man, is borne from Hungary on that funeral barque."

Farther down the river bronzed colliers plied their oars and turned sullen eyes from the passing enemy craft, while fishermen drew back their nets before the rampant White Ensign of Britain. Little did they suspect that beneath the hated banner stood their King, a tragic knight errant who had tried to stop a war, that men might be made happy, and who was now forever banished from the human fold. In a letter to Horthy, wherein he made a last plea for the safety of his followers, Karl had said: "It was not Don Quixote alone who had his tilt with windmills. . . ." The statement proved painfully true. Like the quaint hero of *La Mancha*, Karl had made front against ideologies which hurled him bodily from the saddle.

Now that the game was up and he knew himself irrevocably beaten, these things no longer stung. Calmly the monarch gazed down at the churning waters, yellow with Alpine sand. *Dúna* the Hungarians called their portion of the Danube: Stream of Destiny. In bidding it farewell today he bade farewell to dreams.

At Galatz in Rumania the *Monitor* transferred the prisoners to the *Principessa Maria* which proceeded on November 6 as far as Sulina. Here the British man-of-war *Cardiff* waited under full steam. As soon as the royal passengers had been spirited aboard, anchors were weighed and the journey continued through the Golden Horn.

November 10 found the *Cardiff* skirting Malta and nosing westward toward Gibraltar. Karl and Zita began to wonder whether they would disembark in Marseille or some other port



The *Quinta* at Capo do Monte, Madeira.



Photos Lavery-Smith, Manchester.

Room at Capo do Monte, where died the Emperor Karl. (Bed stood under large picture at left.)

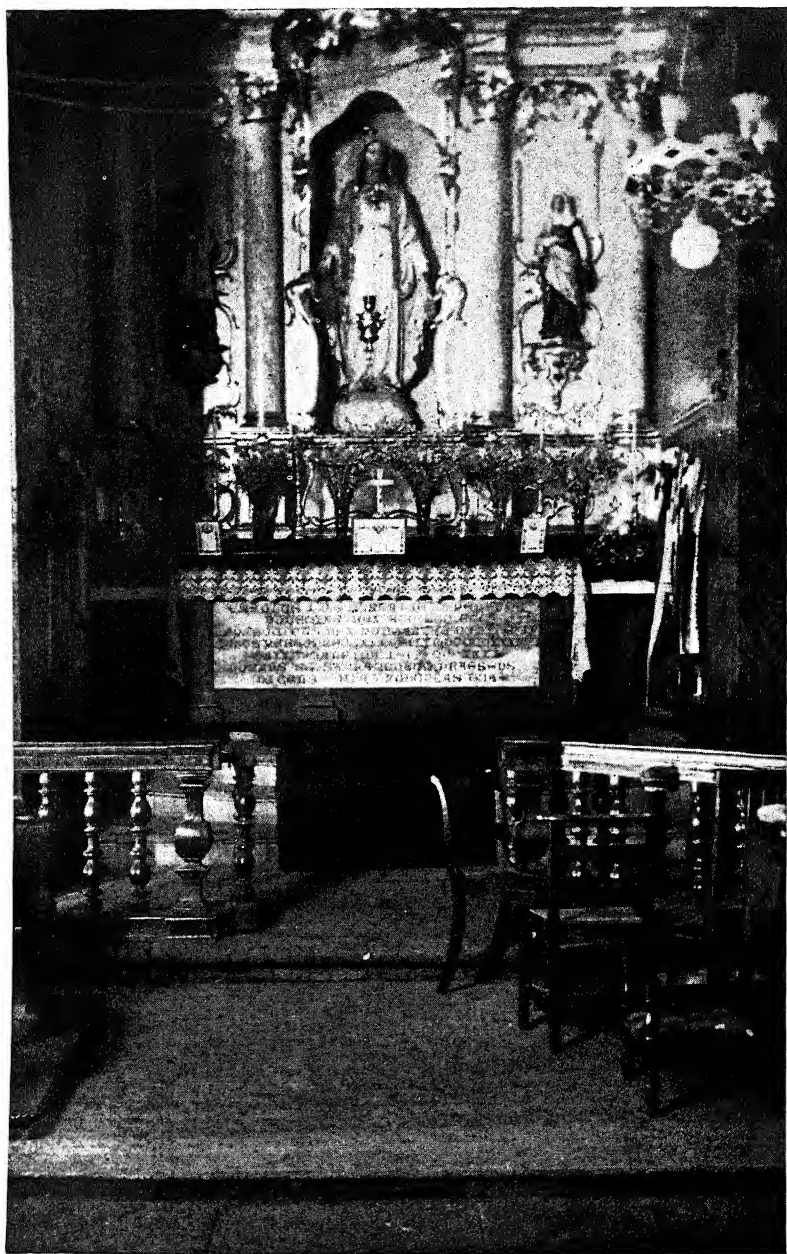


Photo Lavery-Smith, Manchester.

The Emperor Karl's tomb at Madeira.

of southern France, since Hertenstein, where the children had been left, must be their obvious destination. But the ship ploughed steadily on its way, heading for the open Atlantic. As the great ocean loomed before them, the distraught parents suddenly grasped the full meaning of their Calvary: the ship would not touch Europe again.

Zita was almost insensate with shock. "The children!" she cried wildly. "Are we to be carried off without our children?"

The master of the *Cardiff* could offer no reply. He had orders to head for African latitudes and to hold his tongue regarding the ship's log. It would be time enough, once they reached port, for the King and Queen to bemoan their fate. Meanwhile the royal cabin was guarded by a double watch, serving in shifts both night and day, to prevent the prisoners from committing some rash deed.

On November 19 Madeira hove into view and the *Cardiff* dropped anchor in the emerald waters of Funchal. The day was clear, though a sharp wind blowing from the west gave indication that warmth and sunshine, even on these tropic isles, were not perennial. Before the King and Queen could be taken ashore a chill blanket of fog curtailed the brief view of the world they would henceforth inhabit, as though affording them a symbolic foretaste of their desolation. In this balmy paradise where pleasure-seekers reveled in holiday mood, the royal exiles would know utter loneliness and pain.

Arrangements had been made from London for the lease of an adequate house on the outskirts of Funchal. The Madeira authorities, not fully informed as to the nature of the royal sojourn, had promptly put one of the city's most dazzling mansions, the Villa Victoria, in readiness. Only on learning that neither Karl nor Zita could pay the required rent were measures taken to find

humbler quarters which would meet the budget set up by the Entente.

At last the King and Queen were lowered from the boat and taken on land. They were still strictly guarded, for it was feared that Zita, weeping hysterically, might hurl herself into the bay. Her terror at being forever separated from the children threatened to unbalance her mind.

Until final plans were completed the Villa Victoria served as temporary shelter, harboring behind its luxurious walls a man and woman torn with grief. Portuguese servants, unable to understand the royal wants, scurried aimlessly about, crossing themselves and looking heavenward for help. The story of the heartbroken Queen who had been robbed of her little ones soon made the rounds of Funchal drawing rooms, causing emotional Latin matrons to swoon with sympathy. It was thus that a family named da Rocha Machado learned of the royal plight and resolved to offer aid. Not only would Senhor da Rocha Machado turn over a small property on Capo do Monte for use of the King, but he would stir up action among influential officials with a view to reuniting the abandoned children with their parents.

The first of these projects succeeded without trouble. Inasmuch as the Machado clan spent many months abroad, it was an easy matter to settle the Hapsburg guests in the vacant family home, Quinta do Monte, which overlooked Funchal from a mountain height of two thousand feet. To reach this hide-out the King and Queen were forced to ride for an hour on the slow funicular railway that brought them within walking distance of their host's gate. Beyond the wrought-iron portals lay a verdant garden, rich in shrubs and tropic blooms, as well as trees of surprising size. Nestled among these could be seen the low balconied chalet referred to in Spanish and Portuguese as a *quinta*

(due to a vanished custom of limiting miniature estates to one fifth of an acre). Here the royal pair found solace of a sort, gazing at night upon the glittering city far below or the wide harbor that formed its imposing background. With eyes glued to the horizon, they watched incoming ships, each of which might bring news from Hertenstein. But Machado's hopes of making contact with the princely children met with defeat; the Allied Powers intercepted all communications.

Slowly the winter dragged on and a desolate Christmas loomed ahead when at last a government official from Funchal appeared at Monte with a wireless message from Switzerland. Archduke Robert, third eldest of the royal children, was ill with appendicitis and the attendant doctor had refused to operate without first obtaining parental consent. A mere formality, of course; still, the Entente commission did not care to assume such a responsibility, especially since the problem of the children's ultimate destination was becoming acute.

On hearing of her son's illness, Zita could not be held in bounds. Like a tigress she rushed at the perplexed messenger, demanding that he take her with him to the docks and put her on a ship for Spain. She would go to her ailing boy, no matter what the penalty might be. Surely no jailer could deny a mother this right.

Karl tried in vain to assuage her hysteria. If further traveling needed to be done, Zita was now in no condition to do it; the journey from Constantinople to Madeira had been a heavy drain upon her strength. Instead, the King sent a written plea to Government House in Funchal, asking for a short leave. He promised to report to the British authorities at Gibraltar and, if necessary, to proceed from Spain to Switzerland with a police escort.

The request was flatly turned down. To set the monarch free for even a flying visit to the Continent would stir up Irredentist feeling throughout the Danube lands, defeating all that had been accomplished through the League. Only by keeping Karl out of Europe could his followers be held in check.

To be sure, the Entente spokesman who rejected the King's plea did not wish to appear altogether inhuman; he let it be known that the Queen was at liberty to speed to her son's bedside for a brief visit. This privilege was granted on the assumption that Zita would be unable to set out alone.

They did not know Zita. In an hour's time she was ready to descend from her mountaintop in one of the sleigh-carts which glided over Funchal's cobbled roads. A freighter in the harbor took her aboard, despite worried protests of its master, who pointed out that there was no physician on his pay roll, and that his crew could cope with any emergency except the sort that might befall the Queen.

"I shall give you no trouble," she promised meekly. "God watches over us, you know—"

Such childlike reasoning struck a response in the simple man's heart. Superstitious, like all sailors, he hearkened to her words and drew from them an oracular assurance. A lady on such halcyon terms with the Infinite might prove good cargo on a vessel headed for the stormy winter seas.

Thus it was that, within a fortnight, the Queen reached Hertenstein and became reunited with her brood. A cable from Funchal had meanwhile authorized whatever steps might be necessary to save the small Archduke's life, so that Robert was well on the way to recovery when his anguished mother arrived.

Her boundless faith had proved itself. God did look after them. . . .

CHAPTER 24

SHE stayed at Hertenstein for twenty-four hours, aware that a prompt and perhaps final parting lay ahead. The house was surrounded by guards whose job it was to keep out possible monarchist plotters as well as members of the Parma family. The Queen's every move was circumscribed by strict regulations against which she did not dare rebel, for it had been made known to her that the slightest infraction would lead to dire consequences. From Paris Monsieur Briand announced that a third attempt at Hapsburg restoration must be dealt with summarily, so as to quell all future nonsense of this sort; Zita well knew that she was threatened with separation from her husband, who would disappear from Madeira, to be forgotten in some deserted corner of the earth, unless she came to heel and did as she was told.

Her meekness endured throughout the Swiss visit. She showed herself happy and grateful at sight of her overjoyed little ones, who clung to their mother like a flock of nestlings in a storm. But as the hour of farewell approached her heart beat in a panic, for she did not know how to explain to them what lay ahead. Worse than that, she did not know how to explain it to herself.

Application had been made by the Entente commission to place the royal children in an institution, but since the Archdukes and their sisters could not be classified as either foundlings or orphans there had been some difficulty with the Zurich board of guardians. The latter required ample tuition for the care of such highborn charges. Since no specific funds were available

for this purpose the situation had reached a deadlock. It was this impasse which now inspired the Queen to make a desperate bid for restitution of her maternal rights. She appealed to the board of guardians to let her take the children to Funchal.

To the Swiss authorities this seemed an excellent way out of the quandary. Telegraph wires to the Quai d'Orsay buzzed that night with argument and expostulation until in the end economic interests prevailed over punitive zeal. It was decided that all parties concerned would be better served if the upkeep of the royal family came under a single head, namely the Madeira fund. While nine obviously could not live so cheaply as two (discounting the yet unborn infant), the Hapsburg exiles could be more easily controlled as a unit than scattered over the earth. In short, Zita was able to enjoy a small triumph as the children were given back into her care. She bundled them up hurriedly and started on her return journey overseas.

This time she proved a wretched sailor, due to fatigue and strain. No governess or servant had been permitted to accompany the Queen, for the Entente was not of a mind to pamper prisoners with a paid retinue. Countess Agnes Schönborn, who had looked after the children since the early days at Villa Prangins, had been left sobbing at the Hertenstein depot. Though none asked a fee for her services, all former ladies-in-waiting were forbidden to join their mistress abroad. Similarly Baron von Werkmann, last secretary to the Emperor-King, found himself trailed by Swiss police, lest he slip across the border and make his way to the ship that bore Zita southward. To discourage future attempts at restoration a blanket threat was issued against all members of the Hapsburg entourage, warning them, under penalty of death, not to make contact with the royal exiles. Thereby the Entente commission hoped to wipe the matter off its slates.

Zita did not complain. Her happiness at the prospect of seeing her family reunited outweighed even the hardships of the trip. She was wracked with seasickness. But on reaching Madeira a wave of gratitude swept through her heart, for at Quinta do Monte, on the lonely mountain heights, Karl waited for them to come home. Home! Alas, any place where they might rest their heads now merited that name. . . .

The meeting between father and children was a touching one. The baby Charlotte had of course become estranged, since she had scarcely known her parents when they made their flight to Hungary. But Etelka and her brothers remembered nights of homesickness and childish sorrow, when they had cried themselves to sleep. For them the reunion at Funchal had the sweetness of a fairy-tale climax.

They did not see the hair that had gone white above their father's temples, nor the lines that furrowed his lean face. In the short time of Zita's absence Karl had grown painfully thin. This was due partly to undernourishment, but more specifically to the lingering illness which he had not been able to throw off. The lung trouble he had contracted during the War was becoming chronic. From the standpoint of latitude Madeira might have been an ideal place for the King's health, had not the extreme dampness of the islands served to counteract the blessings of a tropic sun. Fresh springs and rivulets formed a vast network across the very mountaintops, accounting for the opulent growth of ferns and moss-covered trees which shot up everywhere despite a harsh rocky subsoil. Funchal derived its name from the fungous products of its bogs and fens, moist with everlasting seepage. Here the famed fennel seed, known as *funcho*, was cultivated for the world's spice markets.

Quinta do Monte was no different from the rest of the town. The walls of the small house exuded a pervading chill that shot

rheumatic pains through the sick man's flesh. Added to this, Madeira winters were characterized by heavy condensation, with great banks of fog rolling inland from the mid-Atlantic, so that for weeks the famed African sky remained as shrouded as a Scottish loch.

Zita strove valiantly to make the best of things. Stretching her scant allowance to its limit, she cooked and baked like a practiced peasant wife. Her menus were not always unimpeachable, just as her washing, ironing, mending and patching of the royal wardrobe left something to be desired. But all things considered, she rendered far better account of herself than might have been expected from a princess born to give orders rather than to receive them.

The Christmas holidays would have been dreary but for the Queen's genius for creating something out of nothing. To be sure, there was the garden with its endless resources: twigs could be shaped into a *crèche* for an infinitesimal Infant Jesus made of cloth; a cedar tree was trimmed with paper garlands fashioned by the children on rainy afternoons; old candle stubs served for the *Adventskranz*, a traditional pine wreath lighted on the four Sundays preceding Holy Night. Lastly, aware that the season's significance is primarily religious, Zita devised a pageant representing Biblical scenes.

Her crowning achievement in these days of penury, however, was the erection of a tiny chapel for the family's daily use. To obtain this she had made entreaties both to the Funchal authorities and the Machado clan who, fervent Catholics themselves, could not refuse so pious a wish. The oratory, complete with miniature altar and an image of the Sacred Heart, lay on a lower level off the main hall and could be reached only by a precariously steep stairway.

As for the rest of Quinta do Monte, its beauty soon gave way to sheer utility. The graceful chalet with its tall French windows and delicate parquetry was transformed into a dormitory for the profuse royal brood. Beds were to be seen everywhere—in the parlor, the hall, the dining room, the pantry. Clothes, dishes, children, dust, confusion, all filled the abode which had been built as a pleasure retreat. At times the Queen's day became so crowded, her chores so manifold, that she resembled a nursery character of other lands—an excessively maternal creature Zita had never heard about, who lived in a shoe. . . .

Even so, she managed. The new year found her strong and courageous, undismayed by the workaday life that had become her lot. Only one worry increased from hour to hour, minute to minute. Karl.

He was getting worse. Early in February a prolonged fever set in, aggravated by asthmatic symptoms. By means of a small charcoal stove (on which laundry flatirons were heated) Zita attempted to combat the cold, since Quinta do Monte, like most tropical homes, boasted no elaborate heating facilities. For that matter, even the best fireplace would have refused to give warmth if fed with the water-soaked logs that were at the Queen's disposal.

By the middle of March Karl's condition had become so serious that official restrictions were at last relaxed and help was summoned from abroad. Two Austrian doctors were rushed to Madeira in the company of Count and Countess Hunyadi who, being at last permitted to come to the sovereign's aid, willingly shouldered the expense. In the meantime Zita struggled with the combined duties of mother, housewife and nurse. The patient's coughing spells and hemorrhages called for frequent changes of linens and other equipment she did not possess.

Lacking an ox cart or the means to hire one, she dared not now—in the seventh month of her pregnancy—attempt the long descent on foot to Funchal. She sent young Otto instead to one of the resort hotels where there might be some towels, buckets and dry wood to spare. Burdened with gifts, the boy returned to the fog-bound villa on the heights. His great eyes shone with excitement as he told of warmth and sunshine in the valley, where people had laughed at his bundled-up appearance. But everyone had been so kind! The management of the hotel would have sent wine and provisions long ago, if police restrictions had been less severe. People far and wide were touched by the royal family's plight, and helping hands longed to reach out in errands of mercy, but there was the danger of antagonizing Karl's jailers and exacerbating his lot. The Entente had made it quite clear that any subversive activities would result in the King's banishment to some uninhabited corner of the earth where he would not be heard from again. Even the most charitable urge on the part of friends or strangers must falter in the face of such threats.

When at last the ban was lifted, philanthropy arrived too late. In the King's critical state only a priest was needed to administer extreme unction, for, at three minutes past midnight, on April 1, 1922, Karl choked to death. Like his great-uncle, Maximilian of Mexico, he scarcely reached the middle years of life. At thirty-four his course was run.

PART FOUR

THE WIDOW

CHAPTER 25

LIKE a graven image the Queen crouched at his bedside. In stony silence she sat, her eyes fixed upon the beloved face that had grown old so young.

She would not believe it. The husband of her youth could not be lying there between cold sheets, his features twisted and made unrecognizable by death. He had been handsome, eager, strong. Five sons she had borne him and two daughters, with another life even now throbbing below her heart. . . . No, it was not possible for such things to happen. What countless thousands of degenerates, criminals or imbeciles walked the earth unharmed, wreaking their villainies upon mankind! If vermin were spared, must such a man as this—a giver of life—be cut down in his prime? Her mind would never grasp what had gone wrong with the excellent God she had always trusted.

Telegraph tickers spread the tidings across a startled world, while at Funchal the most perfunctory of funerals was in progress. Count Jozseph Károlyi, brother of Michael, had been en route to the islands as soon as the Queen's plea for medical aid had been made public. He arrived in time to walk beside the pushcart which bore the coffin, wheelbarrow-fashion, toward the Monte Church a little way uphill.

Some years later, under a blazing September sun, an English lady named Marjorie Lavery-Smith looked on the burial site and wrote with sensitive pen:

"The church wherein is the tomb of the Emperor is but a short distance from Quinta do Monte. It stands on a little

hill up which I was carried in a hammock. It is only a wee kirk. . . . The sun was very hot. A dog lay sleeping outside the door and lizards wriggled between the flags underfoot. . . . It was dark inside but I got my photograph by exposure. The tomb is simple and lies midway in the length of the aisle, to the left of the altar. . . . The rest of the church had been plainly furnished with separate chairs. The floor was flagged, the altar gaudy. Indeed, silver tinsel and paper flowers hung around the lights and wherever else they could be fastened. But the tomb of the Emperor stood back in its bay and seemed glad to be away from such frivolity."

For Zita the picture of her husband's last resting place was not half so clear. She lived through the burial scene as though in a trance, unable to accept the reality that was about her. Heavily veiled, with the three eldest children at her side, she held herself rigid until the ceremony was over and the milling crowd of spectators dispersed. Her utter numbness proved a boon in that it left her unaware of public scrutiny. The entire population of Madeira and the neighboring isles seemed to have flocked to Monte, avid for a glimpse of the bereaved Queen, but only a living statue met the rabble's gaze.

It was after the ordeal had terminated that Zita's traumatic state gave way to emotion. Returning to the desolate villa, she came out of her stupor and broke into a paroxysm of tears. It was not sobbing, but the muffled howl of a stricken animal that echoed through the house, haunting the children with an inchoate sense of tragedy. Hereafter their innocent eyes would wear the blighted look that was their mother's, for no gayety that might pierce the muted wall surrounding their existence would wipe out the blackness of that night in Funchal.

The days that followed acquired a semblance of order through the efforts of Countess Hunyadi, who took over the disorganized

household while European chancelleries pondered anew the fate of Austria-Hungary's first family. With Karl out of the way, the Great Entente saw no further excuse for keeping the exiles abroad. It would be more humane and decidedly less expensive to let them find shelter with Parma relatives or at the court of Zita's ruling kinsman, Alfonso XIII of Spain. As a Bourbon of Hapsburg antecedents (and an eight-century-old profile) the Spanish monarch could be counted on to see his dynastic duty; Zita would doubtless be received with open arms at the *Palacio Real* in Madrid.

These sanguine conjectures met with stubborn opposition from the Little Entente. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Rumania demanded that the royal prisoners be kept under surveillance as before. Zita's return to Europe, they argued, would merely invite renewed monarchist activities among Hungarians whose dormant sympathies had been freshly aroused by the King's death. Nothing would stop the Legitimist Party from championing nine-year-old Otto as a candidate for his father's throne.

Throughout April the powers wrangled without reaching a decision. It was not until the end of the month, when Zita's confinement drew near, that the British-born Queen Victoria Eugenia Ena of Spain prevailed upon her husband to "do something." Alfonso made a strong appeal to the League and won over the Balkan opposition. Zita was given permission to leave her island abode for a palace in Madrid.

A Spanish ship, the *Isabel de Borbón*, set out at once for Madeira. It reached Funchal early in May and waited quietly at the docks while the Queen and her children were spirited down from Monte. Few people took notice of the royal departure, for the cart in which Zita traveled had been curtained by a heavy

baldachin, the sides of which were customarily let down against the mid-day sun. In addition the Queen wore a long black veil and a wide cloak to hide her distorted form. Lest the children be recognized by curious passersby, she separated them into two groups, the little Archdukes being sent ahead with Countess Hunyadi, while Zita herself took charge of the girls. On May 19, the *Isabel de Borbón* steamed out of port with the royal passengers safely aboard.

The trip proved another *tour de force* during which the Queen was seasick and in sore distress. But her unflinching will triumphed over the rigors of circumstance. Freedom and a measure of security lay just ahead, so she repeated to herself again and again. One must rejoice and be grateful!

She made a supreme effort to rejoice and to be grateful. But as the coast line of Madeira melted away in a splash of sunset colors her heart throbbed with a piercing ache. There, on that island, she was leaving behind her other self—that which had been most precious in her life. Karl's tomb, holding all that once had given meaning to her days, would henceforth be the shrine to which her tortured memory must flee.

Even as she sorrowed, and exalted the husband she had lost, a question rose to taunt her soul: the children—was she wronging them? Had she shown herself more wife than mother? Perhaps. In fact, most likely. These sons and daughters, they were Karl's immortality, his testament left in her keeping. Through her devotion to them she would continue to serve *him*, to whom she had been everything: friend, mistress, mother. If this was sinful, so let it be! To her own dying day she would glory in the fact that she had been so much a woman. . . .

On May 21 the ship dropped anchor at Cádiz, where the travelers boarded the Seville Express to Madrid. Swiftly the train

sped northward over the plains of Andalusia (known as "Vandalusia" during the Visigoth and Vandal invasions), through the Murillo country to Córdoba on the Guadalquivir. Next followed the sheep pastures of La Mancha and the steel city of Toledo, where Domenico Theotocopuli (surnamed El Greco) had lived and worked almost three hundred years ago. And now it was but a few hours to the modern capital of Madrid.

Alfonso and his wife waited anxiously at the station, not knowing how their bereaved visitor had withstood the trip. To give additional proof of their good will the thoughtful hosts had ordered the palace of *El Pardo*, built by the Hapsburg Charles V, to be put in readiness for the present bearers of that name. Its location, several miles beyond the city limits, would give assurance of peace and privacy.

No sooner had the boat train arrived and the royalties embraced than Queen Ena's experienced eye (she was herself the mother of six children) took in the situation. Wasting no time on formalities, she pressed her guests into a waiting limousine and sent them off to *El Pardo*, while she herself rushed home to the *Palacio Real* in search of her personal physician. Not long after, as Zita's trunks and bags were lined up on the staircase of the castle, the critical hour approached.

Labor did not come easily this time. Parturition itself was certainly devoid of novelty, but the experience of giving birth alone—the terrible aloneness of widowhood!—that would indeed be new. Zita had dreaded it above all else.

But loneliness and fear did not slow the inexorable march of Fate. In a dim room of the old palace, where Cortez had rendered account of the Indies to his king, hours of pain dragged by until, with the coming of another dawn, a frail Hapsburg archduchess was ushered into the world.

The baby threatened almost at once to fade away like the flickering flame of a candle. King Alfonso, who had himself been a posthumous child, urged immediate baptism. The advice was promptly followed and the infant received the name of Elisabeth (Magyarized to *Erzsébet*).

Zita survived the ordeal with far less than her usual vigor. For a fortnight she lay dangerously ill, unable to regain her strength. But gradually, as the baby thrived, improvement began to show in the exhausted mother, and presently the cloud of worry that hung darkly over Pardo Castle seemed to lift. On their frequent visits to the nursery Alfonso and Ena met with a growing note of cheer, for small *Erzsébet*, flaxen-haired like a bisque cherub, had lost no time in dominating the scene. Her gurgling and cooing brought back to the Spanish sovereigns a memory of fleeting joys which, in these years of their growing estrangement, they had forgotten.

Even from the depths of her tragedy Zita perceived that she was blessed among women.

CHAPTER 26

ALFONSO XIII and his wife were not happy.

Their marriage, contracted for (what dismally trite words!) "reasons of state," had taken place at a time when both had been sufficiently young to simulate—and perhaps feel—a degree of infatuation which made conjugal life tolerable. This passing ardor had sufficed to provide Spain with half a dozen royal twiglets, ensuring the survival of the dynasty. But beyond such eugenic considerations, in which the nation must be concerned no less than the wearers of the crown, domestic relations at the *Palacio Real* had chilled with alarming rapidity. Ill-matched in background and temperament, the King and Queen soon found themselves lacking in the most fundamental requirements for compatibility. The spiritual gulf between them was widened by an even greater chasm dividing the British Ena and her Latin subjects.

They called her "*La Reina Pava*," an appellation which uninformed foreigners translated as "The Peacock Queen." Though this might have suited the golden beauty of her youth the interpretation was nevertheless incorrect. The Spanish for peacock is *pavo real*, or royal turkey. A plain *pava*, therefore, denotes a plain turkey-hen. This type of fowl is slow, undecided at street crossings, a bit stodgy; like certain women it lacks dash and color, and its mental processes are not easily fathomed. It was thus that the Spaniards saw their queen.

They never understood her and, considering the fact that it took her ten years to master the tongue of the immortal Cid, she

was not likely ever to understand them. But gossiping *madrileños* were wrong when they spoke of her cold and haughty air, her proud, insular manner. She was guilty of none of these things—not pride, nor coldness, nor insularity. She was merely shy and very homesick.

Britain had been a smiling place for Princess Ena, daughter of Prince Henry of Battenberg (later Mountbatten) who had married Queen Victoria's prettiest child, Princess Beatrice. She had grown up against the seasoned background of English country life, with its sporting activities, its lawn parties and mellow pre-Raphaelite atmosphere. Under Spain's blistering sun and equally stinging frosts her willowy freshness vanished quickly, giving way to an early matronly languor so characteristic of Nordic women transplanted to meridional climes.

Ena's engagement to the twenty-year-old King of "Spain, Jerusalem, the Canary Islands, the East and West Indies, India and Oceanica" had been maneuvered by two doting mothers and a geographically well-situated aunt. Alfonso's mother, Maria Cristina of Hapsburg (Queen-Regent until her son's sixteenth birthday), had made discreet overtures to the widowed Princess Beatrice of Battenberg with reference to the latter's marriageable daughter. But negotiations progressed slowly until Princess Frederica of Hanover, a Battenberg cousin, invited the British ladies to her Villa Mouriscot near Biarritz. Mouriscot chanced to be only thirty miles from San Sebastián, the royal summer resort, where the young King was currently learning how to drive an automobile. With goggles, dust cap and reefer, he climbed each morning behind the wheel and whizzed down the white beach at the prodigious speed of thirty miles an hour.

This left practically no time for romance. But Aunt Frederica's resourcefulness came once more to the fore. She took her

London guests on long walks near the waterfront and presently, thanks to a flat tire on the left rear wheel of the King's *Protos*, the young people met. It was not actually their first meeting, for they had been briefly introduced in England at a court *soirée* where several hundred pink-cheeked girls with ostrich feathers in their hair had curtsied to the Spanish prince. This second meeting, however, proved no more satisfactory than the first, for Alfonso was completely taken up with his prowess as a chauffeur. As for Ena, she thought the dark-eyed youth (and his automobile) extremely fetching.

Some days later Alfonso's indifference turned to keen solicitude as he realized that the sport-loving Britons would make ideal passengers for his car, particularly since up to that moment neither his mother nor his aunts (the Infantas Isabel, Paz and Eulalia) had cared to risk their lives riding with him. He drove up to the portals of Villa Mouriscot one morning, just at breakfast time, and invited the startled ladies for a drive. Needless to say, they rushed for hats, tippets and veils. In another minute the party was spluttering madly down the Biarritz boulevards, with tooting horn and smoke popping from the exhaust. The Battenberg ladies loved it, and as for old Princess Frederica, she gave herself over to the experience with matchless abandon. As people stopped to stare at the extraordinary modern spectacle the Hanoverian dowager waved at them gaily and all but crowed with delight.

Since the adventure became a daily occurrence, gossipmongers soon spread the news that the King was in love. They hinted at an early betrothal or, more likely still, a runaway marriage followed by a honeymoon trip in the speed demon's gasoline chariot. Princess Frederica smiled approvingly and shared the general belief. All the more devastating was her disappointment

when, at the close of the Battenberg visit, Alfonso sent Ena (who had expressed a fondness for Spanish limes) a fruit-bearing tree potted in a colossal tub. At sight of this unconventional farewell gift a sickening doubt beset both Princess Beatrice and her Hanoverian cousin. If Ena was to become Queen of Spain and thus would surely be eating limes for the rest of her life, why the tree? Did it forecast the girl's return to England with but a few horticultural memories?

No, Fate could not be so cruel. A short time after the separation the dowager-mother, Maria Cristina, was heard from. She had corresponded this time with Ena's uncle, King Edward VII, explaining the desirability of an alliance and inviting Princess Beatrice and her daughter to the pleasure palace of Miramar at San Sebastián. Here, in the presence of more aunts than Ena had ever seen in her life, the two young people became engaged. Their health was toasted in punch, Amontillado and champagne, while telegraph wires bore the tidings to the courts of Europe. By midnight of the same day congratulatory messages poured in from every capital except Berlin, where Wilhelm II sulked, for he had looked with favor upon Alfonso as a prospective son-in-law; the only flaw in the Kaiser's reckoning was the fact that Alfonso would have had to wait for the little Viktoria Luise, aged thirteen, to grow up.

The wedding took place on May 31, 1906, at the church of San Gerónimo el Real in Madrid. It was attended by such exalted personages as the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King George V and Queen Mary of England); Prince (later King) Albert of Belgium; Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Heir Presumptive of Austria-Hungary; Prince Louis Philippe, Heir Apparent of Portugal; Prince Andrew of Greece; Grand Duke Vladimir, uncle of the Tsar; Prince and Princess Alexander of

Teck; Princess Pilar of Bavaria; the three brothers of Princess Ena; all the Infantes and Infantas of Spain; and no Hohenzollerns.

Despite this auspicious company at both the wedding and subsequent coronation, the bride and groom got off to a bad start. Shortly after the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo had joined the royal pair in marriage the glittering procession set out from the church, just behind the Prado Museum, through the Calle Mayor toward the palace. Halfway down the main thoroughfare, and embarrassingly near the Italian Embassy, a large bouquet of flowers struck the carriage in which Alfonso and his bride were riding. A loud explosion followed and in a second the street became a scene of blood and terror. Though the occupants escaped unharmed, two horses dropped in front of the royal carriage and twenty-six equeuries escorting the wedding cortège were killed. In addition, one hundred and ten persons suffered serious wounds.

With profound alarm the young King reflected that night upon the general status of monarchies. Could it be that there was something wrong with the system into which he had been born? If so, what was it that kept his royal kinsmen and colleagues of the purple so confident and cheerful? . . . By morning, Queen-Mother Maria Cristina provided a glib answer. Attempted regicide, she explained adroitly, was no indication of one's unpopularity with the nation at large; it merely bespoke some individual's private grudge. An anarchist, most likely, lurking singlehanded in the dark—

"But what," asked the youthful ruler blankly, "is to be done about it?"

Maria Cristina smiled a wise and owlish smile. "Someone will be made an example of. Meanwhile, my son, it is imperative

that you give a display of courage by appearing today in the streets of Madrid."

Alfonso showed little enthusiasm for this idea. Ena, too, paled at the thought of faring forth to engage in a deliberate gesture of "royal nose-thumbing." But the Dowager Queen was adamant in her behest, and so the newlyweds obeyed. With shaking feet and fluttering pulse they climbed into the state coach and drove again down the long Calle Mayor. Miraculously, nothing happened. Alfonso and Ena spent a bad half-hour, but the ordeal had passed without mishap and the pageant-loving citizens of Madrid had been afforded the spectacle of their noble and courageous sovereigns who, quite obviously, bore no rancor. Maria Cristina had been right. The stratagem was as old as kingship, and it always worked; from ancient times up to the present, a good-sized rock or stick of dynamite hurled at a chieftain determined his career. If he came back for more, his mastery was assured.

After this nerve-wracking prologue to marriage a more secluded life followed for Ena. During the next seven years she was kept very busy, for in that interval she furnished the royal cradle with six successive occupants. May 10, 1907, marked the birth of the Prince of the Asturias; then, in turn, came Prince Jaime, the Infanta Beatriz, the Infanta Maria Cristina, Prince Juan, and—in the opening year of the World War—Prince Gonzalo.

It was only now that a specter more horrible than political disaster stalked the *Palacio Real*. Despite vigorous denial in official quarters, a report spread throughout Spain that three of the King's sons showed hereditary abnormalities directly traceable to the Queen's ancestry. Ena, granddaughter of England's Victoria and Albert, was a transmitter (though not herself a

victim of) the dread disease which is known as haemophilia.

This affliction, attacking only male descendants, but seemingly passed on through the female line, was characterized by profuse and uncontrollable bleeding of the slightest abrasion or wound. In many cases mere external pressure led to internal hemorrhages which, due to the blood's inability to coagulate, eventually proved fatal. Medical science stood helpless before this baffling mystery until in recent years careful research pointed to intermarriage between closely related persons as the most direct factor. Although no specific germ can as yet be isolated, a study of genealogical tables amply supports the theory of heredity.

At all events the royal pedigree of Queen Victoria and her children offered a stark object lesson. Referred to sometimes as the Mother-in-Law of Europe, the Widow of Windsor had departed this earth leaving tragedy in her wake. Herself the daughter of Victoria Mary Louisa of Coburg and the Hanoverian Duke Edward of Kent (fourth son of England's lunatic George III), she had married her own cousin, Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha-Wettin, the son of her mother's brother. This singularly happy marriage of two young people in radiant good health, but whose blood corpuscles were too similar, spelled doom to a future generation of sovereigns. From the nursery at Buckingham Palace there would go forth three daughters who carried the curse of haemophilia to Hesse, Russia, Spain, and to Berlin a withered arm. The first of these hapless Norns was the Princess Royal of Great Britain, named after her mother and wedded in 1857 to Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia; known later as the Empress Frederick, she wrote embittered letters to London concerning the eccentricities of her crippled son, Wilhelm II. In addition she grieved over three grandsons who were bleeders—the children of her second son (Heinrich, one of the

heads of Germany's wartime navy) and her own niece, a Princess of Hesse. . . . The strain of inbreeding had been doubled in this instance, for Queen Victoria's second daughter, Alice, had married Prince Louis (later Grand Duke) of Hesse. The male offspring of this union were acute haemophilics while the daughters, hale and strong, became carriers; one of the latter, Princess Alix of Hesse, married Tsar Nikolai II of Russia and changed her name to Alexandra Feodorovna. She gave birth to four healthy and beautiful girls (whose wealth did not keep them from being shunned by all the eligible men in Europe) and to the Tsarevitch Alexis, stricken with the Coburg curse. Superficial observers hinted at degeneracy among the Romanoffs. They were wrong. With all their crimes and historic vices, the satyrs of the Volga had never bled congenitally; the very rules of haemophilia, decreeing that it must be handed down through female channels, exonerated the Russian house. The little Tsarevitch owed his torment to his mother, Alix of Hesse, whose mother was Princess Alice of Great Britain, whose mother was Disraeli's venerable Empress-Queen. . . . But still another princess had set out from Buckingham Palace to cast a tragic bane over generations yet unborn. She was the golden-haired Beatrice, wedded to Prince Henry of Battenberg; her daughter, Queen Ena of Spain, had given birth to four sons—two of whom were bleeders, and one a hopeless deaf-mute. (There was some hope that the Infante Don Juan would escape the hereditary blight.) To be sure, it could again be argued that Alfonso's own family tree was sufficiently worm-eaten to account for almost any kind of monstrosity. The oldest and most dissipated blood of Europe flowed through the royal dynasty of Spain: licentious Bourbons, mad Wittelsbachs and epileptic Hapsburgs might have produced a complete galaxy of freaks, *but not haemophilia*. The deadliest

of dynastic ills had nothing whatever to do with wickedness or base incontinence. Whatever the wages of sin, the wave of haemophilia here outlined could be traced genealogically to a Victorian setting, conceded to have been the stuffiest and most abstemious of its day.

What of the British dynasty itself? Had the Queen's sons and their descendants gone unharmed? With almost mathematical accuracy the strange canons of the disease seemed to run their course. Only a carrier of the curse could pass it on; Victoria and Albert might have been no carriers themselves, though in their daughters they had obviously produced them. To be sure, Edward VII, his brothers and his heirs remained outside the pale. Nature permitted herself a single contradiction in her own pattern of stern logic: Victoria's youngest son, the Duke of Albany, had been born an incurable invalid (though not haemophilic) who spent the short years of his life confined to a wheel chair. . . .

Queen Ena of Spain had only a passing knowledge of these things. From rare and very secretive conversations at home in England she had gathered that a hidden fear beset the Battenberg family. Throughout childhood her brothers were watched with the most sedulous attention, while Ena might scratch and bruise herself at will without causing the slightest panic. Eventually she had learned that there was a sickness of which she must not speak; especially was silence recommended when young men came to seek her hand in marriage.

Well, she had kept silent. But the full tale was told even without words by the marked princes she had borne for Spain. Hiding her sorrow behind impenetrable palace walls, she never-

theless could hear an accusing nation shouting out her guilt.

Added to this was the outspoken reproof of a husband whose love, at best, had been a sublimation of youthful effervescence, engendered by the sputtering cylinders of a French motorcar. Not that Alfonso showed himself brutally abusive. On the contrary, on learning of his eldest son's infirmity he had comforted Ena by pointing out that God was wont to visit harsh trials upon people in high places. (Had not his own mother, Queen Maria Cristina, been widowed while she carried Alfonso in the third month? As a result of this blow of fate he had been one of the few men in history literally born a king.) No, the little known phenomenon of haemophilia must not be viewed with too much pessimism; Alfonso had never heard of it before, but he believed it to be curable. The chubby Crown Prince most likely would outgrow it before cutting his teeth.

"Besides," said the King confidently, "we shall have other children." In the latter surmise he was right. But when the second boy, Don Jaime, born in 1908, reached his third saint's day without uttering a sound the anxious father took a more somber view of his marriage. Two baby *Infantas* followed, one bronze-haired, the other flaxen, but they brought no comfort, for it was now a safe corollary that they were carriers of a dire hereditary evil. By the time his youngest sons, Don Juan and Don Gonzalo, arrived, the King was already straying from home. The fact that the baby Gonzalo shared the ailment of the Prince of the Asturias overshadowed the hopeful discovery that Don Juan seemed to be unimpaired, at least through the early years of his life. To Alfonso this diagnosis brought no reassurance; the mark of the Battenbergs was indelibly branded upon his house.

Disillusioned at home, the King was nevertheless debonair

and high spirited abroad. He traveled the length and breadth of his domain as well as to the far corners of Europe, living always in opulent style. The Spanish Crown was exceedingly wealthy, the sovereign's annual allowance amounting to 7,000,000 pesetas or \$4,000,000 in American coin. The royal stables held two hundred and fifty horses and four dozen specially bred carriage mules, while the *Palacio Real* was staffed by approximately a thousand servants; sixty ladies-in-waiting attended the Queen and a corps of tutors and nurses supervised the care of the royal children. As for lodgings, the sovereigns could take their choice among innumerable castles at their disposal. Besides the official residence in Madrid there loomed, just beyond the capital, the imposing palace of *El Pardo* (where Zita and her brood had found refuge). Thirty miles to the south along the Tagus River the old fortress of Aránjuez, though seldom used, opened its hospitable doors. Then there was the Moorish Alcázar in Seville; the gloomy Escorial north of Madrid where Spanish kings lie buried; at La Granja, in the Sierra de Guadarrama, the majestic Castle of San Ildefonso (ancient name of Alfonso's patron saint); the summer palace of Miramar at San Sebastián; and the showpiece of them all, the Castillo de la Magdalena, built by the citizens of Santander to lure the royal family away from its near-by Basque playground. In addition to these formal addresses the King held sway over a sumptuous mansion on the Cuatro Caminos where resided the actress Carmen Ruiz Moragas de Gaona, who for many years held his affection.

As Princess of Great Britain, Ena might have minded the rival; as Queen of Spain, she had learned to ignore. Motherhood and the crushing sorrow it had brought her more than absorbed her days. As for the burdens of court ceremonial, Ena shared

these with her husband's mother and his aunts, the Infantas Isabel (Countess Girgenti), Paz (dividing her time between Madrid and Nymphenburg, Munich, since her marriage to Prince Ludwig Ferdinand of Wittelsbach), and the scandalous Eulalia (Princess Antonio of Orléans). The three sisters had been daughters of spendthrift Queen Isabel II; they were pious, kindly creatures with a flair for gossip and the bullring.

Bullfights . . . The granddaughter of England's Queen Victoria would naturally have a squeamish time at them. To hide her horror from the crowds Ena attended the gory spectacle armed with a pair of smoked binoculars. Gazing intently through these—and seeing nothing—she found it possible to applaud the dexterity of matadors.

But still another terror clouded the Queen's uncompromisingly British soul. It was that dank, ill-ventilated chamber in the depths of the Escorial, called—a dreadful, untranslatable word—*el pudridero*. This vaulted room was designed to hold (for a period of five years, or until full decomposition has taken place) the bodies of the royal dead. After this time the remains were placed either in the octagonal Tomb of Kings or in the Crypt of the Infantes. A fearful sequel to less fearful death. . . . She found it hard to think of herself and the children—

No, to Ena nothing in Spain came easy. Hampered by a total lack of linguistic talent, she had betrayed at the very start of her reign that her memory also was not of the first order. She never would be able to recall from the *Guía Oficial* (Spain's Almanach de Gotha) how many dukedoms, marquisates and baronies had been conferred by the Crown. Even less certain was she of the fact that in accordance with the practice of Charlemagne (who had named twelve Peers of Empire) the more recent Charles V. had created the grandeeship of a dozen nobles raised, by fiction, to the rank of cousins-to-the-King. It seemed highly important

that the Queen be versed in these matters, but she was not. Her thoughts centered upon homelier things: upon a hapless marriage and a future clouded with grief.

Unable to cope with the Madrid temperament, Ena rendered better account of herself as hostess to foreign visitors. She was so glad when someone came, particularly from across the Channel. . . . One day French President Loubet arrived, followed by King Carlos and Queen Amélie of Portugal. Again England's Edward VII with the beauteous Alexandra (who was very deaf) sat with King Friedrich August of Saxony across the royal board. Friedrich August, benevolently garrulous as ever, twirled his blond mustache and complimented Ena on her figure. Her face, austere and melancholy, lighted up in a grateful smile, for the Gibson Girl Queen had not been spoiled with gallantries.

Her rare smile grew rarer still when news arrived in February of 1908 that Portugal's corpulent Dom Carlos (the Braganza-Saxe-Coburg King at Lisbon) and his son Louis Philippe had been murdered during a pleasure drive with Queen Amélie and a younger boy, Prince Manoel. Hereafter Ena, who had been brave enough on her own wedding day, would shrink from Sunday drives in open carriages. Knowing that Spaniards did not love her, she lived forever in dread. As the years went by, the *colgaduras*, those emblazoned velvet and silk hangings thrown over balconies on feast days, would adorn Madrid countless times without being witnessed by the Queen. Her public appearances became more and more official in character, being limited to charity bazaars, the *Feria* of Covadonga and the traditional celebrations of Holy Week.

No, unlike her illustrious grandmother, Ena was never to become a queen of the people. *La Reina Pava* she would be until the royal pageant faded from Madrid.

CHAPTER 27

ZITA sensed the unhappiness of her hosts. In almost daily contact with Queen Ena, she soon caught a glimpse of tragedy far deeper than that which had marred her own life. True, Zita herself had known the utmost extremes of melodrama; rising to a throne at twenty-four, she had become an exile at twenty-seven, a widow at thirty. And nothing but uncertainty lay just ahead. Yet even so she thought herself enviable, for she had never been a cast-off wife, a woman disdained and mocked in public. She had been gloriously loved! Today her heart, so rich with memories, ached for blonde Ena, who shivered beneath her cloak of regal ermine. Ena's blood had chilled through lack of love.

But sympathetic suffering was detrimental to a mother convalescing from childbirth. Before long Zita realized that the bane that hung over the *Palacio Real* in Madrid was settling likewise upon Pardo Castle. It sapped her strength and caused even the children to subside into a hush. Decidedly this was no place for them to remain.

"We do not need a palace," she confided to Alfonso on one of his quick morning visits. "Is there not a house in some small village?"

The King pondered this matter and decided that there was. On his holiday jaunts from Santander to Biarritz he often passed through a quaint town called Lequeitio, which lay bathed in sunshine just beyond Bilbao on the Bay of Biscay. Here the



Photo Pierre, Funchal.

Archduke Otto at his father's funeral.



Photo Underwood & Underwood, New York.

Zita and the children during the first year of her widowhood at Lequeitio.

Basque family of Uribarren owned a villa which for years had waited for a tenant.

"It is the draughtiest house in Spain," explained Alfonso, "because it is made up of windows. But it can be had for a song."

This appealed to Zita, who did not want to be a heavy burden to the state that harbored her.

"We can board up all the cracks," she promised, recalling the manifold tricks devised to fight Madeira winds.

Two weeks after Erzsébet's birth the wanderers were ready for the northward trek. Supplied with funds that had been contributed by an anonymous group of thirty Spanish noblemen, Zita headed for the Uribarren rookery. She left the capital on the *Exprés del Norte* which sped from New to Old Castile, through Aragón and Navarra into the Basque country. Through dusty train windows the face of Spain and the great problem of Spain—aridity—became revealed to the travelers as they beheld gray mountains and parched plains. Although two oceans surrounded seven-eighths of its periphery, the country had all the limitations of a landlocked continent with only the most restricted outlet to the sea. Bleak sierras cut off the center plateau which, due to its calcium and talc content, discouraged vegetation. Yet in spite of such poverty of soil, Spanish homes were riotous with color; brightly glazed tiles and flower pots embellished balconies or patios, supplying in tenfold measure what dour Nature had refused to grant. Black earth and dung were at a premium, since from such humble alchemy sprang the aromatic *jasmynes* and *claveles* which tumbled gaily over garden walls. Sterility had made Spain into a high priestess of enchantment. Few corners of the earth could offer beauty more breath-taking than hers.

Crossing the turgid waters of the Manzanares, Zita caught her first glimpse of the famed Escorial. Like the Holy Grail or the Black Madonna of Monserrat outside Barcelona, the gloomy and fantastic castle of Philip II had long fired her imagination. This Hapsburg, who disinterred his ancestors and collected them in a special tomb, had predicted the number of his successors up to Alfonso XIII (an adequate supply of empty sarcophagi supported this prediction). But Philip had epitomized himself in the most awesome of architectural monuments. Built to commemorate the martyrdom of San Lorenzo, an early Christian who had been roasted on a grill (*escorial*), the vast structure had been designed grill-fashion in a crisscross of quadrilateral courtyards. Its ultimate purpose remained a mystery to poets and historians of Philip's day no less than to their successors.

Concerning the Escorial, the veiled Muse sang:

“Twenty-seven miles north of Madrid
Lie the fallow plains roamed by the Cid . . .

Rockbound soil 'neath a deathmask of chalk,
A lonely land where no man will walk,
A barren waste bewitched by the yawn
Of eternal dusk and eternal dawn.

In the heart of so heartless a span of earth
A forlorn eccentric's dream gave birth:
Crowning the wilderness, bare as a bone,
Stands a monstrous edifice made of stone.

A college for monks, some scribes have named it;
A royal pleasance, the legends proclaimed it;
A church for the world's most colossal *Te Deum!*
But King Philip whispered:
“A mausoleum . . .”

(An arsenal where he might assemble
Weapons that made his sick soul tremble;
And mortal shapes in their earthly dust—
The souls of his ancestors he could trust!)

From a Gothic window he watched the slow train
Transport the Most Catholic Kings of Spain,
Isabel and Fernando, sunk in sleep
More than half a century deep.

Emperor Carlos, a trifle shabby,
Arrived in his shroud from Saint Juste Abbey;
Pinto Castle saw again
The eerie procession of poor Queen Jane.

Crazy Juana! The last of them—
King Philip bowed deeply to kiss her hem.
He was drunk with the only love he knew,
The love of a past that had ceased to be true.

Alone, with his dynasts arrayed at his side,
He chanted dirges until he died . . .”

With unbelieving eyes Zita and the children stared at the vision of stone that rose before them like some strange mirage out of the Arabian nights. Archduke Otto gasped at the infinity of apertures and windows (2500 in all) that dotted the white palace walls.

“Is this the house we are going to?” he asked, remembering descriptions of Lequeitio.

For the first time—in how many months!—Zita laughed heartily. No, the terraced magnificence of the Escorial with its one hundred miles of corridor was not, Heaven be praised, their goal. Whatever flaws the Uribarren villa might disclose, it would be more livable than this Bastille of the desert. Otto was told

to be devoutly grateful that he would not need to spend a night under the roof of his most eccentric ancestor-uncle, the Spanish Don Felipe, el Segundo, de Habsburgo.

The train rushed on through the Goya country to Fuentodos and to Zaragoza (named by the Romans "Caesar Augusta") across the Navarra hills. It stopped briefly at Loyola, home of the Jesuit Order, where a deputation of friars brought refreshments to the royal family. Shortly after this the tiny fishing port of Lequeitio came into view.

Without loss of time Zita settled down to her new obligations as a parent, teacher and housekeeper. After ascertaining which corner of the Uribarren homestead was the most weatherproof, she promptly undertook to make it presentable. Aided by eager fishwives who flocked round her with brooms, dusters and sprinkling cans, the former Empress-Queen soon had the place in proper shape.

Her next problem revolved about kitchen matters and the foodstuffs of the region. The use of oil in place of fat, garlic in place of onion, offered distinct obstacles. But repeated visits to the village market place eventually removed such hazards as merchants vied with one another to supply the royal table with delicacies smuggled across the bridge of San Jean de Luz from France. After a bit of experimentation with seasoning and spices, Zita was able to balance the family diet. Due to necessary economies her menu abounded in fish, particularly the popular *bacalao á la vizcaína* (a species of cod prepared in olive oil).

Having thus insured the physical welfare of her brood, she turned to yet another matter—the children's education. Otto, Etelka, Robert and Felix were of an age that called for discipline and a regulated curriculum of daily studies. With three mere toddlers and a newborn infant to take care of, the burdened

mother could not begin to cope with such a task. But again willing hands reached out to help. The Jesuit Fathers at Loyola offered to make contact with Budapest in the hope of securing an Hungarian tutor for the princely children. The effort brought immediate results as a Benedictine scholar, Job Banhegy, accompanied by a lay brother, set out at once for Lequeitio. Within a fortnight the nursery wing at Villa Uribarren had been transformed into a miniature school with blackboard, benches and a punishment corner for rebellious classroom recruits.

Neither Otto nor his sister and brothers took to lessons at this time with more than a moderate show of enthusiasm. There were so many things at Lequeitio that a growing boy or girl could do! Sand castles could be erected on the wide smooth beach. Daily dips in the ocean, followed by long excursions along the dunes of San Sebastián, offered an ever-recurring temptation. Thus the good Job Banhegy had an irksome time trailing his charges over cliffs and strand to hear their catechism.

Since deep-sea fishing was the village's main trade, the royal children became particularly engrossed in boats and tackle. They struck up ardent friendships with bargekeepers and long-shoremen whose pungent argot they picked up in a hurry. While Zita thought her little ones safe in the care of their frocked tutors, Otto and his brothers took a hand in hanging up *Capitán* Gregorio's fishing nets at the same time that Etelka and the Benedictine friars helped to sort *Capitán* Gregorio's latest catch of Biscay herring. If children and tutors returned at sundown, their clothes reeking malodorously, Zita attributed the stench to Lequeitio's marine locale.

"Such a quaint place," she explained to the monks whose damp cassocks scented her rooms, "so bracing and wholesome!"

She would not be found grumbling, for this was neither Prangins nor Funchal where she had had a husband at her side; she was today a beggar in a kindly land that had volunteered to give her shelter. It smelled? Ah, so did Venice, Praha, Bucharest and every other spot referred to as exotic. Zita had learned that there were times when it was best to forget one's nose.

Since her sojourn in Spain, where Austrian Hapsburgs once had been enthroned, imperial emotions stirred once more in her breast. Almost imperceptibly her manner changed from queenliness to higher majesty, for at Madrid she had heard herself referred to as the Empress. Shabby and poor though she might be, her spirit had rallied at the implication of that exalted address. So this was how they viewed her here? They accorded her full rank! Very well, she would resume her former status and be henceforth the Empress Zita, while Otto would be reared as the King-Emperor. Already the younger children had been informed of their brother's position as head of the dynasty; when there was no wrangling or hair-pulling in process among them they stood up primly and saluted Otto as their liege. Teachers and villagers too spoke to the youthful heir in tones of submission and respect, leaving no doubt as to his intrinsic station. All of which threw into Otto's path a set of influences that could be calculated to ruin the noblest of characters; surrounded by undue reverence and adulation, the growing boy had every reason to become insufferable, self-important and overbearing.

Oddly, no such effect was noticeable in the lad. A natural gravity, deepened by the suffering he had seen at a tender age, precluded any overbearing tendencies. He had witnessed his father's flight, illness and death; he had known his mother's panic in the face of penury and starvation. Out of this knowl-

edge his whole character was taking shape, crystallizing in a passionate sense of responsibility toward his little brothers and sisters. At the age of eleven he sought to hire himself out as a deck hand for a fishing crew that was headed toward the Azores. In this way he hoped to earn enough money to supply the Uribarren homestead with heating facilities, since the windy villa more than lived up to its reputation.

During the first winter the imperial family spent at Lequeitio seven of the eight children suffered heavy bronchial colds; a short time later five of them developed pneumonia. Zita was frantic. Yet she dared not complain too audibly, knowing full well that nobody in the world was obliged to give her better quarters. The charity that had been shown her must be accepted with good grace.

The ordeal passed and with the coming summer King Alfonso arrived at San Sebastián for the bathing season. He motored up to Lequeitio to pay a call and, seeing the pallid children, whose peaked faces bespoke a slow convalescence, he decided that they needed exercise. A set of bicycles was sent up that same week, together with a case of codliver oil. Henceforth the narrow strip of beach beyond the Uribarren house rang with shouts and laughter as Etelka and her older brothers pedaled furiously along on their iron steeds. Sunshine and the tang of salt air brought back glowing cheeks, so that the children faced the second autumn and winter with greater resistance.

The following year Alfonso again obeyed a generous impulse. Remembering his own motoring exploits along the Basque Riviera, he presented the imperial children with a five-passenger automobile. But since there was no chauffeur the handsome vehicle remained a stationary showpiece, to be scrambled in and out of, like a fortress under siege. Only when Zita was able to

locate a villager who, for the sheer joy of riding, offered to steer the car, did the whole family climb in for a magnificent outing. But petrol being expensive, the bicycle races continued. Children from neighboring cottages joined in these games and before long daily contests were arranged, with oranges or soda water served as refreshments by the losing team. The entire village watched and contributed bright coppers to the lemonade fund.

On Sundays Zita clothed her brood in spotless white. The boys wore sailor suits with detachable collars and cuffs which could be washed and ironed on short notice, while Etelka, Sári and the baby paraded with wide sashes tied around their middle. Zita herself donned only black. Her mourning remained absolute, unmitigated. In speech, in dress, in every aspect she apostrophized the memory of him who had gone.

She worshiped in the ancient parish church. At times curious pilgrims from near-by Lourdes ventured across the French border to catch a glimpse of the imperial exiles whose fate stirred many a sentimental heart. For several seasons the Virgin of the Massabielle Cave suffered competition from the widow of Lequeitio, whose picturesque tragedy endeared her to the tourist trade. Had Zita cared, she might have exploited public curiosity at a handsome fee.

During the third year of her Spanish sojourn monarchist sympathizers in Hungary organized a secret committee to gather funds and furnish a monthly income for the royal princelets and their mother. In addition, discreet inquiry was made regarding the "uncrowned King"—was he developing normally? Did he give promise of good health, intelligence and character? Father Job Banhegy wrote a detailed description:

"Otto is nearing thirteen, though he appears to be fifteen or

sixteen. As to looks, Fate has been kind to him; he is tall and well proportioned, with very dark eyes and curly brown hair that falls over a high forehead. His expression is frank and as wholesome as the color of his cheeks. I find him good-hearted and able to control himself under any circumstances. As a student he shows rare intelligence and judgment, conversing fluently in several languages and taking the keenest interest in literature, geography and history. He likewise shows aptitude for scientific subjects as well as athletics. As to sports, he excels in tennis."

Such was the information that Budapest received concerning the royal Pretender. Doubtless the above eulogies were tinged with flattery, due to the bias of a devoted tutor. But Otto's later conduct, his early maturity and his dignified restraint in a world that more than once would offer to make of him an operetta hero, proved some of Father Banhegy's praise to have been well deserved.

With financial help coming from Hungary, Zita was able to expand the plans for her firstborn's education. She inquired of the French Government whether Otto might be permitted to attend a preparatory school, preferably the famous Abbey of Clairveaux in the Department of Aube. Permission was granted and the boy departed forthwith to the Cistercian institution.

During his absence matters in Spain underwent a serious change. Early in 1923 an Arab leader named Abd-el-Krim had incited the Riffian tribes of Morocco to open revolt against Spanish authority. The guerilla struggle that followed embroiled France as well, draining the war coffers of Paris and Madrid without perceptible military gains. Since King Alfonso failed to display the necessary ferocity, Spain accepted the self-proposed dictatorship of one of its best-known generals, Don Primo de Rivera, who took over the high command. But this

expedient, though it made things much more agreeable for Alfonso, did not lead to a sensational victory. The conflict dragged on until 1926, when it was ended by the sheer exhaustion of all parties concerned. True, Abd-el-Krim sued for peace and was exiled to Reunion Island; but France and Spain derived little joy from the campaign after the loss of time, money and man power had been computed. Their protectorates in Africa remained intact. But the very word "protectorate" carried a transient meaning.

In Spain the war had not been popular. Since it entailed no visible benefits at home, yet called for enormous sacrifice on the part of even the lowliest citizen, the nation found itself swept by a wave of resentment. People assembled in Madrid to demonstrate against Rivera's tactics (or lack of tactics) at Melilla, where thousands of Iberians had met with ignominious death. They hissed Alfonso's car in public, demanding to be told why wars must be financed by the poor, while the wealthy sat in snug comfort behind their money bags.

It was an unpleasant interval which did not improve when, some time later, the dictatorship was suspended and Primo de Rivera entered retirement. The ensuing laxness in authority opened the doors to demagoguery and unrest, culminating in the demand for a general election. For a while Alfonso juggled his fortunes, depositing neat sums in foreign banks against a rainy day (he kept a five-million-dollar umbrella in Canada). He also engaged in earnest negotiations with the fiery Niceto Alcalá Zamora, who headed the oncoming revolution.

At Lequeitio, in the heart of the Basque country, Zita could not fail to sense the gathering storm. Even if she had not known revolt and popular uprisings from personal experience, the electrified atmosphere of northern Spain, particularly Catalonia, be-

spoke the seriousness of the situation. She did not wait to learn more. Packing the children's clothes and her few personal possessions, she fled once again, this time to France. The Hungarian Minister in Paris obtained passage for her across the border but, being unable to gain a permit for permanent residence, he urged Belgium as the next goal. Here Zita would be made welcome by Count Hippolyte d'Ursal, a Flemish nobleman who cherished fond memories of his Viennese youth. At Château d'Ursal the imperial fugitives could at least pause to catch their breath.

The Empress accepted. Humbly she sat at Count Hippolyte's fire and listened to well-meant advice. The Belgian Government, she learned, was willing to receive the Hapsburg guests for an indefinite period, but their sojourn in the country would hinge upon fulfillment of one condition: no political activities must be indulged in under the protection of Belgium's flag. Zita solemnly agreed. In a burst of gratitude she went further, offering to hide behind the anonymity of a fictitious name; she would call herself the Duchesse de Bar.

The tactful d'Ursal threw up his hands in protest. "Your Majesty," he cried, "no such sacrifice is required!"

But Zita remained firm. She remembered Switzerland and the endless wanderings that followed upon her ejection from its peaceful borders. She also remembered that Belgium's present royal house had had little luck with Hapsburg ties; Archduchess Henriette had scandalized the court from the moment she arrived as the bride of Leopold II (the King's later frivolity had served as a mere foil for Henriette's early giddiness). Then there had been poor Princess Charlotte, daughter of Leopold I. As Maximilian's consort she was destined to meet tragedy in Mexico and to return, insane, to mourn a Hapsburg dream. Lastly,

blonde Stephanie, married to Archduke Rudolf, saw her life clouded by the dark mystery of Mayerling. No, Austria had brought no happiness to Belgium. It was incredible that Albert, soldier-king of the small realm, should be willing to tolerate another Hapsburg within his borders. Out of sheer gratitude, then, Zita must efface herself as much as possible. The Duchesse de Bar. That would be her name.

Château d'Ursal of course had not been offered as a permanent refuge, since Count Hippolyte's family must be considered. Zita knew that these good people shared cramped quarters in order to make the Austrian guests comfortable. This realization weighed upon her conscience and she strove almost at once to do something about it. There must be no idle lingering; as soon as the fatigue of the journey had been overcome the search for lodgings must continue.

The Empress wanted an unpretentious cottage with just enough room to set up a dormitory for her brood. The stipend she received from Hungary would thus permit her to decline foreign charity. But Count Hippolyte would not hear of this. He scurried back and forth among his friends hoping to discover one who had a country estate for rent. It mattered not how haunted the halls, how high the mortgage or how obsolete the plumbing, just so the *milieu* carried a proper feudal note.

In the end his efforts were rewarded, for it was bruited about that the Prince of Croix sought a tenant for his medieval chalet at Steenockerzeel in Brabant. Count Hippolyte hastened to Brussels, where he bargained with the Prince and won the latter's sympathy for the imperial exiles. In less than a week's time all arrangements had been completed and the transfer was made. At last the Empress could settle down again to a regulated life of peace and privacy.

Castle Steenockerzeel was a compact, turreted, pinnacled structure built in the best storybook tradition. Surrounded by a wooded park, its only approach consisted of a narrow stone bridge crossing the ancient moat which opened at one end into a miniature lake. The portal of the manor was overhung with ivy, while a cushion of deep green moss clung to the parapets and cornices above the windows. Silent and lonely, the place breathed secrecy and offered complete respite from the turmoil of the outer world. Here Zita and her children would indeed be hidden from sight.

She loved the place, for nothing had ever been so perfectly suited to her mood. On entering she felt the dark walls close about her like great shadowy wings, and in her heart the quiet assurance took shape that she would not go forth from here again unless the drama of Destiny claimed her once more for a rôle of heroic proportions.

CHAPTER 28

THE flight from Lequeitio proved to be timely, for in Spain matters were fast going from bad to worse. Niceto Alcalá Zamora was whipping up class hatreds into a fine froth by pointing out the high cost of monarchic government. The tenor of his speeches and pamphlets was unequivocal: down with tyranny—the common man must come into his own. Paraphrasing this idea into a party slogan, the fiery Zamora made his famous declaration:

"No se puede jugar á la baraja con puros ases!" ("The aces alone don't make a deck of cards!")

This simple axiom heralded the doom not only of aristocracy but of capitalist society in Spain. From every corner of the land a thousand throats took up the echo: "A nation needs workers, not gentlemen!"

The clamor reached Alfonso's ears. Genial and democratic in his personal contact with his subjects, the easygoing monarch embodied the very antithesis of a tyrant; but it was not to be denied that he had been an excessively expensive fixture. It took no argument to convince him that if Spain's national budget hoped to achieve a state of balance, royalty must go.

After months of indecision and sporadic rioting, the popular demands for a general election rose to a chorus. Alfonso listened to reason and set April 12, 1931, as the day for a nation-wide vote. Throughout the time of waiting he remained safely in his palace, completing plans for departure. When the bad news came and Spain proclaimed itself a republic, Alfonso would not

be caught in a quandary; he had already made arrangements for a pleasant sojourn in that mother of republics, France.

The sweeping victory of Zamora's party at the polls opened a new chapter in the history of modern Spain. On a wave of popular acclaim the stocky demagogue rose to the presidency while Alfonso XIII dropped his unlucky number and cheerfully entered the brotherhood of ex-kings. Since mass hysteria might lead to acts of reprisal, it was deemed advisable for the royal family to depart secretly and in shifts. On the night of the election Alfonso took the wheel of his newest racing car and sped toward Murcia, southeast of Madrid, where a United Press correspondent interviewed him at three-ten in the morning. Thence the journey continued toward the Mediterranean. The three-hundred-mile drive was climaxed in a dash by motor launch from Cartagena across the bay to the waiting cruiser *Príncipe Alfonso*. On deck stood Admiral Magaz, rigid and ill at ease. He ordered a salute fired as the royal guest came aboard. A moment later the ship weighed anchor and steamed out to sea, bearing Europe's latest deposed sovereign from the shores of its newest republic.

Queen Ena and the children had meanwhile chartered the first train going north toward San Jean de Luz on the French border. Their luggage bulged with clothes, jewels and the Bourbon plate.

The Hotel Savoy at Fontainebleau had been agreed upon as the family's destination. In a cheaply furnished room Ena settled down to wait for news of her husband who, she hoped, had entered France by way of Marseille. Gazing with blank expressionless eyes upon the hideous wallpaper, the square brass bed, the florid curtains and antimacassars, she reviewed the past that seemed to her no less distorted a dream. At last the terror and

the fear had ended. Unable to become a Spaniard at heart, she now could stop pretending; no more mantillas, combs and roses in her hair, no more washing of Beggars' Feet on Holy Thursday, no more court gossip, bombs or bullfights. And best of all, no prospect of a regal sepulcher in Philip's haunted Escorial! Ena of Battenberg, granddaughter of Britain's Victoria, sighed with relief as she reflected that no hooded prior would pound on her coffin, crying, "*Señora! Señora! Señora!*" and, turning from it, say, "Her Majesty does not answer. Then is the Queen indeed dead." No, she would not be carried to that dread chamber below. Instead, she might lie peacefully someday under a plot of English grass.

The political crisis likewise brought a private problem to a head, for the long-pending breach between Alfonso and his wife could now take its course without giving offense to twenty million subjects who regarded the dynasty's affairs as their own. The reunion at Fontainebleau was but a prelude to separation; once their domestic fetters were loosened, the King and Queen would go different ways. Only the checkered careers of their sons and daughters would bring them occasionally together again.

But the passing of a kingdom affected communities no less than individuals, to wit: the Spanish village of Espinosa greeted the abdication with a prompt decline in its birthrate. The reason was obscure though logical. According to an ancient tradition all families of Espinosa origin were eligible to service with the Montero Guards who, in rotation, paced nightly before the royal bedchamber. In order to win this distinction for their offspring, expectant mothers from all over Spain were known to hasten to the little town for an auspicious accouchement. Many a lady's sudden disappearance was explained by candid relatives:



Photo Underwood & Underwood, New York.

Castle Steenockerzeel in Brabant, Belgium.



Photo Clairon, Brussels.

Archduke Otto in 1938.

"Oh, she has gone to Espinosa to give birth to a Montero!" It so happened that the guardsmen of that name wore picturesque but clanking armor and their clatter outside his room had for years annoyed the King. Thus in bidding Spain farewell, Alfonso had shed no tear at losing his majestic Monteros. On the contrary, while the crestfallen gentlemen exchanged their polished hardware for less dazzling mufti, their former master looked forward to the luxury of uninterrupted civilian sleep.

On reaching Fontainebleau Alfonso and Ena found themselves showered with telegrams and letters of sympathy; French bankers, British cousins, American millionaires, all offered their services to the dethroned royal pair. At Château Steenockerzeel the Empress Zita also penned a touching note, assuring her former hosts of a warm welcome as well as a share in what scant means she possessed. The tenor of her words was pathetically revealing—Zita had not yet grasped that most monarchs make better provision for exile than her husband had done. Between Karl's poverty and Alfonso's wealth yawned the same spiritual gulf which separated idealistic impulse from sound business sense. Cheerful, cynical and resilient, the Spanish King would not die of neglect on some forgotten isle. He would winter in Rome and greet the spring on the Riviera, while summer found him at Epsom Downs betting on the Aga Khan's horses.

Perhaps it was as well that Zita did not know these things, since they would have added immeasurably to her bitterness. She fixed instead upon a new hope, fed by reports from Budapest that Hungary remained loyal to the Crown. No specific move toward restoration loomed in store, but funds for Otto's education continued to arrive in tiny contributions from innumerable monarchist die-hards. In addition, a former court official offered his services as chamberlain to the Empress, while Agnes Schön-

born reappeared to assist in caring for the younger children. Both these faithful creatures asked no pay for their services, knowing well that Zita would not have been able to afford it. Her budget allowed for Otto's tuition at the University of Louvain, where the young Archduke had just enrolled, and for the skimpiest of tables at home. All dispensable luxuries had been whittled down to a minimum. Desserts were banished from the imperial menu with a stern phrase: "We must not eat up Otto's Ph.D." This regimen of self-denial gave to the Empress and her children a lean and aristocratic look that would persist through the years. Other royal dowagers saw their ankles thicken and their figures wane while Zita remained slender as a reed beside her wiry sons and gazelle-limbed daughters.

Clothes were a serious problem. A tailor must be afforded for Otto, but the rest of the family struggled along with makeshift garments that underwent interminable alterations. Each of the boys wore his brothers' suits in turn until Rudi, the youngest, offered a tearful protest. Maternal resourcefulness was strained for a final *tour de force* in patching the lad's breeches so that they could be donned without utter loss of small-boy pride.

The girls were more easily equipped, since Zita clung to black and all her former light frocks could be remodeled as need for them arose. Until they grew up the young Archduchesses would not know the thrill of wearing something new.

On his eighteenth birthday Otto's majority was proclaimed by Count Albert Apponyi before a meeting of Hungarian Legitimists, who in turn sent the Pretender a magnificent uniform bordered with gold braid and sable. Otto was photographed in full regalia and featured on the rotogravure pages of the world's leading newspapers. People abroad, especially women, remembered that he had been beautiful as a child. They

found him still beautiful, which infuriated him because it brought back to mind how long his mother had kept him in curls. Thereafter he scowled on being confronted by a camera. He also grew a mustache.

Essentially his character was serious. At Louvain the imperial scion studied mathematics, history, statecraft and philosophy, besides extra-curricular tutoring in foreign languages. According to his teachers, Otto achieved distinction in every subject. Norman Porter, an American fellow student at Louvain, wrote of the quiet Duc de Bar: "He is different from the rest of us in that he has an enormous power of concentration and a great capacity for work. Even if he were not an emperor, he would still stand out as the University's first scholar."

Zita took such commentaries with a pinch of salt. Accustomed to sycophantic flattery, royalty put little faith in superlatives. In this respect Zita was not unlike wary Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands who, on learning that her daughter Juliana had been graduated from Leyden University with highest honors, drawled suspiciously: "You don't say! . . ." It was a time-worn axiom that in classrooms royal blood seemed to preclude low marks. Thus Zita smiled indulgently at her son's academic laurels, secretly hoping that they had been honestly earned.

During Otto's third year at Louvain news came of the death of his uncle, Prince Sixtus of Bourbon-Parma. With a special permit from the French and Belgian authorities Zita and her eldest-born attended the funeral in Paris. It was the first family reunion since the turbulent years of the War when Sixtus had taken a leading part in the shaping of Austria's destiny. Renown had attended his activities since then, for he had married well and for a time had engaged in African exploration. His colonial services had won for him the gold Explorer's Medal of France.

In stony silence Zita stood beside the bier, her heart torn by poignant memories of a time when she and Karl had hoped to save a world from destruction. How far away they seemed, those days of fierce sincerity and impracticable idealism! Yet Karl's name would remain linked with them as long as men recorded history. His spirit would live on, a bright flame burning. . . .

The surviving Parma brothers, having always retired behind the shadow of the brilliant Sixtus, served as fitting pallbearers. Xavier, Prince Consort to the Grand Duchess of Luxemburg, had meanwhile become the father of a cluster of Luxemburg offspring, while Felix and René were still scanning the marriage horizon for an agreeable alliance.

It was during this Paris sojourn that Zita found herself again in touch with world affairs, since conversation among Parma relatives turned as usual about the theme of European politics. Having for a decade lost track of international problems except in so far as they converged upon her fate, she now gained a comprehensive view of what had happened in post-war Europe during the years of her exile. While she and Karl languished at Funchal, Italy had seen the rise of a blacksmith's son named Mussolini (whose mother, an ardent admirer of Mexico's Indian patriot Benito Pablo Juárez, had purposely chosen the latter's first name for her son). The Italian Benito's career, to be sure, had been less consistent than that of his overseas counterpart, swinging as it did from Marxian socialism to a new reactionary movement called fascism. In 1919 he had founded his first "*fascio di combattimento*" or fighting unit, which by 1922 had swelled enormously until it included officers and soldiers of the standing army. At a party congress in Naples the leader (already hailed throughout the land as "*il duce*") was proposed for the office of Premier, whereupon the King's cabinet resigned

and Victor Emanuel confirmed Mussolini's appointment on October 30, 1922.

Reared in the aristocratic tradition, Zita had only the most fragmentary grasp of social problems. Good government was to her simply a matter of good housekeeping. If the steward of empire understood and respected his job the masses were bound to be happy. Nothing complicated about that! She merely hoped that this Mussolini, who had eclipsed Italy's Tom Thumb King, was a worthy steward of empire. For the rest, her long absence from Parma had weakened the ties that bound her, native Italian though she was, to her girlhood home. Hearing her brothers and cousins discuss the pro and con of fascism, she found herself guilty of a dispassionate objectivity, quite as though the country they talked about belonged to another planet.

Similarly she learned of Germany's metamorphosis as she might of a phenomenon out of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, wondering all along if what she heard could be part of a dream. True, she had read the astounding chronicle of Adolf Hitler's climb to power, from a poverty-stricken Austrian childhood to the chancellorship of the Third Reich. But emotionally she was dead to all matters German. She had not forgotten that the Hapsburg Empire had been sacrificed on the altar of Teutonic pride.

Her bitterness against Germany had softened only once during the post-war years when, at Madeira, Karl had read aloud to her a letter from his mother's Saxon kinsman, King Friedrich August. The despair of a vanquished people, ground to earth by the heel of victor nations, cried for redress. Spiritual and economic ruin had ushered in the monstrous period of inflation during which the printing presses turned out marks by the trillions (the only successful industry) and foreign profiteers descended like vultures upon the ravished land. Yet Karl had not

lived to hear the worst. In 1923 the miseries related by Friedrich August two years earlier had reached a stage bordering on chaos; the German mark, once approximately twenty-five cents in United States coin, had fallen from 3000 to 414,000 to 700,000 and finally to 1,000,250 to the dollar. "This ghastly nightmare," wrote Hans Fallada, "must wreck the morale and destroy the fiber of a mighty nation. . . ." That was precisely what it did. When ten-thousand-dollar mortgages began to be paid off in the new currency by the equivalent of ten American cents, long-suffering German burghers went quietly insane. They tossed out the vestiges of Liebknecht's communism and of the democracy of Herr Ebert, willing to accept the most flint-hearted despot of antiquity who could restore a semblance of economic values. Into this crisis stepped Germany's war hero, Field Marshall Paul von Hindenburg, beloved among all classes of people and champion of old-fashioned conservatism. But Hindenburg was an old man, exhausted by his military labors. As president of the bankrupt republic he proved of value only as a symbol of German brotherhood and union. The time was ripe for a Messiah in any guise.

That he should appear in the person of an unknown and underfed artisan out of shipwrecked Austria was an ironic prank of Fate.

CHAPTER 29

FOR Zita the European picture held interest only in so far as it concerned the future of the House of Hapsburg. Therefore her gaze remained focused upon the Danube scene, where matters looked dismal indeed.

The War had left Austria crippled, impoverished and torn with hopeless dissension from within. To counteract the growing encroachment of socialism, conservative elements had banded together under the leadership of Prince Ernst Rüdiger von Starhemberg, who formed a party along fascist lines and raised a private army called the *Heimwehr*. Despite the pacifying efforts of President Wilhelm Miklas, class struggles continued and five chancellorships (Schober, Vaugoin, Ender, Dollfuss, Schuschnigg) followed in quick succession, while a strong *Anschluss* party added its shouting to the Babel of discontent.

Too late the Allied Powers realized their mistake. Seeing that a starving Austria would surely drift into Germany's arms, they hastened to finance first Dollfuss, then Schuschnigg, in return for which these harried gentlemen agreed to save the nation's "independence." Even a Hapsburg restoration was not frowned upon, since it might keep Hitler's propaganda machine from sweeping Vienna into the Reich's fold. To this end President Miklas received instructions from Paris to restore certain Hapsburg properties and to raise the ban against the exiled imperial family. Suddenly Zita and her children found themselves no longer snubbed by the Entente; from a black sheep, Archduke Otto had been changed into *persona gratissima*.

The newly arrived funds somewhat unhinged Zita, whose pinched economies had become a habit. She succumbed to an orgy of spending and bought a Ford. In addition, Archduchess Etelka was groomed for a visit to Vienna in order to feel the popular pulse. Only when there remained no doubt of what his reception might be, would Zita allow the Pretender to set foot on Austrian soil.

With talk of a Hapsburg restoration spreading through Europe's capitals there was considerable flutter in the royal marriage market. True, the Dual Monarchy had been mutilated beyond recognition, but the name of Hapsburg still surpassed all others in age and prestige. Its past alone guaranteed its future, regardless of an inglorious present.

Discreetly Zita scanned the ranks of suitable candidates, most of whom were too old. It was unthinkable to unite Otto with Juliana of Holland or the equally matronly Grand Duchess Kyra of Russia. Alfonso's daughters, nearer the Archduke's age, were automatically eliminated as carriers of the dreaded haemophilia. But Scandinavia had a number of large-boned princesses and Italy boasted the lovely dark-eyed Principessa Maria, youngest of King Victor Emanuel's children.

Thus Otto was sent traveling, first to Stockholm and then to Rome. In Sweden he visited King Gustaf Adolf at the latter's country residence of Solliden, where he inscribed his name in a vast guest book, ate *smörgasbord* and bagged a stag. But he returned unmarried.

When the Italian trip was planned the Empress decided to play chaperone. Accompanying her son to Rome, she held court in a gilded hotel room, surrounded by Parma kin and friends of her own youth. Thus fortified, she made contact with Victor Emanuel and his Montenegrin Queen.

International press wires were ready to flash the story of a Hapsburg-Savoy match. But again nothing happened. Otto, it seemed, was a trifle stubborn; his student life as Duc de Bar had given him a taste of freedom and a willful heart. Maria's beauty notwithstanding, he refused to fall in love by royal command.

In the end this attitude saved his face because, even if romance had blossomed at first sight, there would have been no chance for an engagement. Mussolini had turned the tables and Italy's foreign policy was undergoing a change. *Il Duce* had originally promoted the idea of a dynastic alliance between Otto and Maria, hoping that a Hapsburg restoration would prevent Hitler from absorbing Austria. He had supported Engelbert Dollfuss as well as the latter's successor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, both of whom were committed to the Entente plan of keeping Austria isolated from the Reich. But England and France showed little gratitude for these favors; while pressing their own advantage in Europe they frowned on Mussolini's Ethiopian campaign and harassed Italy with sanctions. This brought a sweeping realignment of powers in its wake. *Il Duce* veered around and made friends with Germany; in exchange for Hitler's non-intervention in Africa he promised to condone the coming *Anschluss*. This meant that a marriage between Archduke Otto and Princess Maria would not only be valueless from a political angle, but downright embarrassing, since the German annexation of Austria would eliminate all prospects of a restoration.

Zita was outraged by these developments. With her characteristic faculty for ignoring unpleasant truths, she temporized and sparred with Fate. Austria was not yet German. Despite the newly-cemented Rome-Berlin axis there could be no certainty that Hitler would succeed. In short, Zita must cling to the last thread of hope until events proved her wrong.

Meekly the Empress returned to Steenockerzeel where she resumed her quiet life. But behind the white mask of her face burned unquenched fires that belied outward quiescence. Like a tense gambler scanning the green tables, Zita sat waiting; her heart was set on playing *va banque*.

From Budapest and Vienna loyal supporters continued to send her messages of encouragement. Occasional hints contained in these letters pointed to an impending crisis. The call? She felt sure of it. So much so that Christmas of 1937 found her in particularly buoyant spirits. She refurbished the family wardrobe with a lavish hand and kept the household in a turmoil of suspense.

This feeling of expectancy communicated itself to the outside world and gave rise to a maze of rumors. Even America shared in the general hubbub; newspaper correspondents from Boston, New York and San Francisco hovered about Steenockerzeel, armed with pencils and candid cameras. They clamored for interviews.

With regal condescension Zita granted an occasional audience to the gentlemen whose readers (mostly feminine) longed to know if Otto's coronation would revive the Vienna of Strauss waltzes, Lehár operettas, dashing guardsmen and romance. If this were guaranteed, the surging tourist trade would set not only Austria but all Europe back on its economic feet.

Alas, Zita could vouchsafe no such promises. But she enjoyed the glow of amiable publicity and sunned herself in its warm rays. While Otto and the younger children rubbed shoulders democratically with tradesmen and callers alike, Zita assumed a long-forgotten air of majesty and played the empress. She employed all the trappings of the old school, transforming the cramped parlor of her rented castle into a "throne room." When visitors arrived they were bidden to wait in the hall while she

swept dramatically down the stairway directly in front of them, without casting a glance to left or right. Striding into the "throne room," she seated herself upon a creaking armchair and waved through the open door to her chamberlain, Count von Degenfeld, who, in turn, announced the callers. The fact that the entire pantomime took place within sight and earshot of the visitors themselves did not shatter Her Majesty's poise. With grotesque seriousness Zita registered bland surprise at their presence and inquired into their reasons for seeking an audience. More than once Otto smiled at his mother's performance, though she failed to see the slightest cause for merriment.

The year 1938 did not fulfill the high hopes she had placed in it. Despite her generous Christmas spending, the call from Vienna never came. Instead, early in March, Hitler's war machine began to rumble and before the Entente Powers grasped what was happening the annexation of Austria had become a fact. Chancellor Schuschnigg, who had dared resist the tide, managed to escape assassination (the fate of his predecessor, Engelbert Dollfuss). He was made a prisoner in an attic room of the Hotel Metropole, while advocates of both democracy and monarchy dispersed and Hapsburg's star faded from the horizon.

Prior to the *Anschluss* there had been a lively exchange of letters between Steenockerzeel and Vienna. Count Leopold Kunigl (Tyrolean representative of the Austrian Monarchist League) and Baron Friedrich von Wiesner (representative for the exiled Hapsburgs and recognized leader of the Legitimist movement) had attempted to bring about a last-minute restoration. Under Zita's tutelage the Archduke Otto had addressed a letter to Schuschnigg, dated February 17, 1938, following the Berchtesgaden meeting between the Austrian chancellor and Hitler. It ran:

"My dear Herr von Schuschnigg:

"The events of the last days compel me to write you. You are aware of the fact that I have always regarded a speedy restoration of the legitimate monarchy as the best guaranty for our independence. Despite your loyalty and your Legitimist sentiment, which I have never doubted in the slightest degree, you nevertheless again and again have postponed the final solution of Austria's problem.

"Today the enemy has been able, through a stroke of incredible and arbitrary violence, to press your government into a dangerous dilemma. We have been throttled by a new tragedy which opens the doors to indiscriminate interference from abroad. This is the reason why I must speak with you, since you carry the burden of responsibility before God and the nation.

"From my standpoint as Austria's rightful emperor, I regard our foreign policy as of the utmost importance. We must seek help against the menace of an overpowering neighbor, and we can find such help only with the Western nations. But our effort to approach these Western powers must necessarily be secret, and for this reason you ought to carry out every step in person, not entrusting the task to your Foreign Minister, Guido Schmidt, in whom I have no confidence and whose German sympathies are sufficiently known.

"As for the military angle, Austria should turn all her strength toward rearmament, placing this goal above other financial obligations, regardless of their urgency. With a sound army we shall not need to tremble as at present.

"Your policy at home should pacify the Leftist flank, provided the workers are willing to prove themselves patriots as well. . . . One of the best forces you have not yet availed yourself of is the Legitimist party. It is tremendously important that you employ this force against the fatal excesses of nationalism [i.e. fascism]. And now I appeal to you as a man whose loyalty to his emperor and his people remains unshakable—first, make no further concessions to Germany while you remain in office; second, notify me at once if new

threats or demands are issued by Germany; third, should you find yourself unable to withstand the pressure of the Germans or our own Nationalists (who favor the *Anschluss*) I urge you to turn over to me the chancellorship. I do not ask for immediate re-establishment of the throne, but rather the mere functions of chancellor, which are constitutionally of the same value as actual restoration of the monarchy.

“OTTO, I.R.”

Obviously Schuschnigg had spent an uncomfortable week over this letter only to decide, in the end, that the youthful and inexperienced Pretender was no match for Berlin's Hitler. Unable to ward off Austria's doom, Kurt von Schuschnigg nevertheless must save the dynasty from being engulfed as well. He placed his solitary figure between Otto and the throne, taking the brunt of the invader's wrath while Zita and the imperial children remained unhurt beyond Austria's borders.

He met with little gratitude for this. In distant Belgium the Empress granted frantic interviews, appealing through the press to the Western nations for aid. She was quite unmindful of the fact that the Entente itself had mutilated Austria and brought it to its present plight. Otto's inheritance was but a mockery of Hapsburg's ancient glory, a miserable carcass better lost than won. But she could not relax her clutching grip on royalty's last tatters. However small, however wretched—with Hungary thrown in, Austria would have been worth holding. A crown was, after all, a crown. . . .

Her protests were unavailing, though they met with grave repercussions in the Reich, where Otto's letter had already been made public. Since any appeal to the Allied Powers betokened animosity toward Germany, the Berlin Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*) retaliated by putting a price on Otto's head and issuing

a warrant against his mother on a charge of treason. Henceforth no Hapsburg would dare tread on German soil.

At Steenockerzeel the brief lull of hope gave way once more to apathy. The sight of their embittered mistress caused recently hired servants to tiptoe through the halls, aware that the return of strict economies would entail their own discharge. The royal stipend granted by the Vienna Parliament had of course been canceled under the new régime. Thus Zita's entourage must be made up again of volunteers whose sense of loyalty became its own reward.

The general gloom settled also upon the children. Long years of exile and privation had left them physically none too robust. Yet far more harm had been done their souls. Isolated and deprived of normal companionships, the youngsters had grown up in a distressing atmosphere of contradiction. From the cradle they had been inculcated with an inordinate pride in their imperial rank, though at the same time they knew themselves persecuted and driven from the very land that was supposed to be their home. Even the name of Hapsburg (so dear to their mother) seemed to be a stigma; it stamped the young Archdukes and Archduchesses as outcasts. To be sure, Otto, Etelka and Robert had reached maturity and a degree of adjustment. But their grave faces, like those of the smaller brothers and sisters, were touched by an unutterable melancholy.

Europe meanwhile enjoyed another respite of six months. Then, in September, 1938, Germany and Czechoslovakia clashed over the problem of three million Irredentists dwelling in the Sudeten Mountain area of what was formerly Bohemia. These people (of Austro-German stock and tongue) had been lumped together with Czechs, Slovenes, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Hungarians and Poles to form an artificial bulwark against the Reich's expansion to the East. Unfortunately the plan had been

evolved and carried out without the consent of the minorities in question; the Sudeten folk, though forced under the rule of Prague, had steadfastly refused to co-operate. They remained sullen and unruly until, twenty years after the Armistice, Hitler made capital of their discontent.

He flung the challenge boldly into the Entente's teeth. His terms were simple and unequivocal: either Czechoslovakia must willingly surrender the disputed territories or there would be a clash of arms. President Benes was given a brief interval in which to make up his country's mind.

As the situation assumed a threatening stage, with Czechoslovakia and the Reich exchanging bitter notes, Teuton aggression seemed certain and both France and England reared their heads with a mighty snort. But their combined puffs proved ineffectual, since neither country was prepared to follow up its snorting with force of arms.

The matter ended with a quartet of nervous statesmen calling one another's bluff and resolving upon dismemberment of Czechoslovakia as the lesser of many evils. At Munich an historic meeting took place at which Chamberlain, Daladier, Hitler and Mussolini contrived to turn the Versailles tables. Thus, with winter coming on, the repatriated Sudetens made ready for a German Christmas tree while ex-President Eduard Benes said farewell to Prague and accepted a professorship at the University of Chicago. Prime Minister Chamberlain, on the other hand, bore the full brunt of international venom; his policy of appeasement was flayed unmercifully by the press. A satiric anecdote soon made the rounds, reporting that the British statesman had been asked whether he did not find the trip to Munich a trifle expensive.

"Not at all," was said to have been the Chamberlain reply. "I pay with Czechs. . . ."

CHAPTER 30

At Castle Steenockerzeel the Sudeten crisis was viewed with an icy calm.

Zita no longer raised her voice in protest nor did she grant newspaper interviews. A strange serenity had descended upon her spirit. Only now, when there no longer was a spot on earth which she could call her own, did she learn the true meaning of peace.

Peace was wantlessness.

Through years of suffering and frustration she had at last evolved a way of life, based on a view of human ambitions and relationships from a perspective hitherto unknown. The world with its triumphs and defeats, its cruel laws of crime and punishment, its glories and its dismal shame, all passed before her inner eye. And as she scanned the piteous pageant a realization dawned upon her that neither she nor any other mortal being ever saw life in its proper focus. Men's hearts and minds were forever dominated by passions, hungers, prejudices or the fierce madness of an ideal. Death did not seem too high a price for all of this. Mankind had paid that price for centuries and would be paying it, God willing, for aeons yet to come. Conflict, alas, was the very germ of life. It would cease only when there was nothing left to fight for.

Out of this knowledge Zita had found peace, the peace of utter wantlessness. It seemed to her that all through life she had been struggling to get something—a husband, a throne, a bril-

liant future for her children. She could not help it, for in her veins throbbed the acquisitive Parma blood. But Fate had proved a harsh disciplinarian whose monotonous lesson was driven home in a series of unending rebuffs. Beaten at last, she had ceased fighting and, in ceasing, had found escape. Only when people stopped wanting things, and badgering one another for them, would there be an end to hate. Who was to blame? She did not know the answer. But one fact loomed forth incontrovertibly and with a dismaying insistence, namely, that men were cast in a divinely diabolical mold which caused them (sublimely asinine compulsion!) to spend their strength battling for youth, health, happiness, as well as less noble ends of greed, vengeance, and the sheer savagery inherent in the beast of prey.

Viewed from this standpoint, civilization looked disheartening indeed. Yet at its most chaotic its pattern was shot through with gleaming threads of hope which lent meaning to the dark design. Out of this tracery of trial and error, blending into the background of humanity's most garish mistakes, was woven the rich cloth of history.

Zita read a great deal these days. She dipped occasionally into Homer, Aristotle, Dante, though personal memoirs and biographies of more recent vintage were better suited to her taste. For modern writers, particularly of journals and periodicals, she felt nothing but contempt; newspaper reporters remained now her principal phobia. They seemed committed to the task of keeping humanity on edge and in a dyspeptic dither with the constant expectation of catastrophe. In fact, Zita suspected that panic headlines throughout the world's news sheets had become part and parcel of present-day living. The average citizen's morning coffee became flavorless without the proper sinister note of evils yet to come.

True, dire things went on in Spain. Occasional reports from Alfonso and Ena shed a dim light on Generalissimo Francisco Franco and his cause. What had happened to the republic of Don Niceto Alcalá Zamora? Had Spain not been unanimously behind the anti-clerical "People's Government"? Zita did not know, nor would she engage in speculation about it. European affairs during the past two decades had taught a single truth from which she herself had drawn a grain of wisdom: no form of unwanted rule or misrule could be imposed upon a nation—for long. Even despots remained in power by the grace of those whom they tyrannized. In short, people in every land had just about the kind of government that they deserved, since all power in its last essence lay within the fists of the common man.

Was she betraying her own class and putting royalty to blush? Had she abandoned Otto's cause?

Far from it. Her faith in Hapsburg's destiny remained undimmed, just as she did not swerve from her conviction that royalty and the monarchic form of government would retain the hallmark of antiquity. Nations created their own symbols to revere—not vice versa—and it had been a nation which, for its own designs, had raised the House of Hapsburg to eminence.

The present years of exile did not matter, since they were but a drop in the great sea of time. Nor did it matter whether Otto gained or lost the throne of his ancestors. The important thing was the survival of the line, so that a day might never come when Austria, Hungary, or any of the former dominions, called a Hapsburg back in vain. For this reason Zita had given birth eight times, insuring the continuity of the dynasty. It did not matter whether Otto ever ruled; his children and his children's children would be there to hear the call. And future generations might yet see the renascence of a Holy Empire of Germanic

Nations ruled not from Berlin's Wilhelmstrasse but from the venerable halls of Vienna's Hofburg.

Thus dreamed the Empress in a twilight that precedes both darkness and a dawn.

THE END

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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